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ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that evaluated the effectiveness of the Minnesota Education Effectiveness Program (MEEP) are presented in this report. MEEP is a school-based program designed to improve the Minnesota educational system and is facilitated through ongoing staff development processes. The participating schools are supported by a statewide network of councils and facilitators. Phase 1 of the evaluation process provided summative and formative evaluations, which were based on data obtained from a survey of 995 out of 2,299 participants and telephone interviews with 46 educators. Phase 2 will identify a process for tracking MEEP's impact on student learning through group planning meetings. Findings are presented regarding respondents' demographic characteristics, program effectiveness, and impact. Some outcomes include teacher empowerment, positive attitudes toward teaching and students, increased staff involvement and collegiality, and improved student self-esteem and participation. Recommendations are made to continue or increase funding for MEEP, to conduct a formative evaluation of MEEP's support systems, and to develop a comprehensive ongoing evaluation process. Thirteen tables, one figure, and an executive summary are included. Appendices contain the survey and interview format. (LMI)

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Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program

Evaluation Report

January, 1992

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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program (MEEP) is a school-based program structured to improve the existing Minnesota educational system. MEEP has been funded in part by the Minnesota State Legislature and supported through resources provided by participating school districts. An Advisory Task Force, composed of educators throughout the state, serves as a policy-making body.

While the mission of MEEP is to enhance learning and instruction through planned change based on research, it is facilitated through ongoing school-based staff development processes supported and delivered through a network of local, regional, and state resources. The vehicle for change within MEEP is the school site itself. Change is implemented through the efforts of a site-based leadership team composed of the school's administrators, teachers, support staff, and/or parents. Each site's leadership team functions with a knowledge of and a commitment to long-term change.

A network of trainers is used to support the schools participating in MEEP. The MEEP support network includes other MEEP schools, regional facilitators, local site coordinators at the district level, and the MEEP staff at the Minnesota Department of Education. Each region of the state has an Educational Effectiveness Advisory Council composed of representatives from local sites, and a Statewide Advisory Committee exists comprising staff from each region. In addition, MEEP sponsors two major statewide conferences -- a winter conference and a leadership conference -- each year.

An initial pilot group involving 26 leadership teams was implemented during the 1984-85 school year to collect baseline data for MEEP. Since then, the program has continued to grow at a rate of approximately 100 new school sites a year with evaluation an integral part of the MEEP process. In 1991, seven years from MEEP's inception, a major impact evaluation of the program was sought for use both in the legislative sessions beginning in January, 1992, and in a planned revision/update of MEEP.

Key Findings

The Effectiveness of MEEP

- Perceived mission of MEEP. Respondents describe MEEP as a general school improvement effort focused on the processes of schools or as a change effort focused on shared decision-making and participatory management. Others perceive MEEP to be focused on problem-solving/critical analysis skills or as a process for planned change.

- How MEEP has been implemented

    - Types of MEEP activities implemented. A majority of individuals (64 percent) reported that the "MEEP activities" occurring most frequently at their schools have been MEEP team meetings, leadership team meetings, and/or other types of site-based activities. Some individuals (15 percent) provided comments related

to training and staff development, while others (9 percent) indicated that the efforts of school staff or MEEP teams have focused on various types of applied research activities used for action planning.

- The degree to which MEEP activities have been implemented. Half of respondents (52 percent) reported that their schools have been engaged in MEEP activities on a regular (weekly or monthly) basis. While the second largest group of respondents (43 percent) indicated that their schools have been engaged in MEEP activities on *a little* or *some* basis, a third group of respondents (6 percent) indicated that MEEP is used *extensively* or *completely* at their schools. Only 8 percent of respondents reported that MEEP was currently inactive at their school.

- MEEP activities implemented by location of school. Greater Minnesota schools tended to be more involved in training/staff development activities and site-specific activities than either urban or suburban schools, while suburban schools were more frequently engaged in institutional research and self-study types of activities. Urban schools tended to be more involved with teams or site-based activities in their MEEP efforts. Greater Minnesota schools were more likely to have regular (weekly and monthly) MEEP activities in place than were suburban or urban schools. However, 10 percent of respondents from greater Minnesota schools reported that their schools were inactive or that MEEP was no longer being used at their school.

- MEEP activities implemented by length of time in MEEP. Overall, the frequency of MEEP-related team meetings being implemented increased the longer a school had been involved in MEEP while the number of training/staff development activities decreased with time. Schools in their first year of MEEP tended to be more involved in applied research activities for action planning and/or goal setting. Schools new to MEEP tended to have the fewest number of MEEP activities implemented, while schools with the greatest amount of institutionalized change in place were the ones in MEEP the longest. The fifth and sixth year of the MEEP process appears to be the point in many schools at which MEEP's process activities shifted from being a set of ongoing monthly activities to an institutionalized weekly mechanism.

- MEEP activities broken down by degree of implementation. The largest percentage of activities being implemented "extensively" or "completely" were related to goal-setting. Training/staff development and applied research activities were the activities with the largest percentage being implemented on a regular weekly basis, while MEEP team/site-based meetings and goal-setting activities were the ones with the largest percentage being implemented on a regular monthly basis.

- Aspects of MEEP the most/least valuable and helpful

  - Aspects of MEEP the most valuable and helpful. Half of the respondents (48 percent) described various MEEP processes associated with participative practices, models of change, and collaboration. A second group of respondents

(27 percent) described some product or outcome of MEEP activities, while a final group of respondents (25 percent) provided comments which coupled various MEEP processes and products.

- Aspects of MEEP the least valuable and helpful. Overall, 20 percent of respondents indicated that they could not think of any aspect of MEEP that has not been helpful to them or to their schools. One-third of respondents provided comments related to MEEP inservice/training and workshops, while a second group of respondents (22 percent) indicated that MEEP has taken resources away from other school activities. Lack of support for new MEEP team members and for staff in transition was an aspect identified as least helpful by 21 percent of respondents.

- How to know whether the MEEP process has worked. The largest number of respondents (42 percent) indicated that, although there have been no formal efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of MEEP within many schools, individuals perceive things to have changed for the better. In general, their comments were related to the empowerment of teachers, positive attitudes towards teaching and students, and increased levels of staff involvement. One-third of respondents reported that effective MEEP teams/committees, increased staff collegiality, improved problem-solving skills, and expanded networks were indications that MEEP is working. A third group of respondents (18 percent) indicated that positive feedback from school personnel was an indication that MEEP has been working, while other respondents (17 percent) described various formal evaluation processes that have been implemented at their schools. Others (14 percent) suggested that the general enthusiasm for MEEP at schools was evidence alone that MEEP has worked.

- Outcomes attributed solely to MEEP

  - Activities distinguishing MEEP. The largest group of respondents (37 percent) reported that MEEP's assimilation of all school personnel in the change process has set it apart from other types of change-related activities at schools. A second group of respondents (29 percent) identified MEEP's process as a factor that has distinguished MEEP from other types of change-related activities, while the content of the MEEP process/activities was identified by a third group of respondents (26 percent) as a factor separating MEEP from other change-related activities.

  - Outcomes attributed solely to MEEP. The largest number of responses (47 percent) was related to the effectiveness of various MEEP processes. A second group of respondents (37 percent) identified specific goals that their schools had attained, e.g., increased levels of awareness and knowledge and changed teaching methods, while a third group of respondents (27 percent) referred to improved morale in schools, joint ownership of change and/or improvement among teachers and administrators, commitment to change, and improved attitudes as outcomes attributable to MEEP.

  - Extent of change occurring and MEEP's influence on change. Respondents

indicated that the increased involvement of principals and positive experiences as members of MEEP leadership teams were aspects of change occurring the most. On the other hand, they reported that the allocation of time and money to support school improvement efforts and the allocation of in-school planning time to work on school improvement activities were aspects of change occurring the least.

- Influence of MEEP on change. Respondents reported that MEEP has influenced and/or provided positive experiences for members of the leadership teams, provided leadership team members with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and implement a school improvement program, and increased the involvement of principals in school improvement activities.

- Special concerns regarding the MEEP process. Overall, 73 percent of respondents indicated that the MEEP research base is used in the decision processes around change and improvement. In part, this came through in the application of MEEP's "15 characteristics." While 42 percent of respondents indicated that they had not experienced a period of stagnation at their school, 58 percent of schools reported that they had experienced a plateau at some point. Of those that reported such an experience, many reported multiple and mixed reasons as to why they perceived the experience to have happened.

The Impact of MEEP

- Impact of MEEP on schools and school staff. Over half of respondents indicated that MEEP has had a positive impact on their schools and school personnel. In particular, they provided comments related to professional renewal of staff, increased cohesion among staff, improved levels of collegiality, and increased teamwork. One out of five respondents provided comments related to staff empowerment, the value of having a process for solving problems, and the opportunity to experiment with innovative instructional methods and explore change. A fourth group of respondents provided a variety of comments related to positive changes in school climate and staff morale. A number of respondents reported that their school atmosphere has improved significantly.

- Impact of MEEP on students. A first group of respondents (34 percent) indicated that MEEP has had a positive impact on student self-esteem, gotten them more involved with their own learning experiences, and promoted a greater sense of ownership. A second group of respondents (32 percent) reported that students have benefitted from better instruction as a result of MEEP, while (20 percent) indicated that students have benefitted from the positive climate that MEEP has cultivated within schools. While a number of respondents (18 percent) indicated that MEEP has had little or no impact on students, others were unsure as to MEEP's impact on students (14 percent).

- Impact of MEEP towards long-term change in schools. A first group of respondents (34 percent) indicated that MEEP has provided schools and school personnel with a process and vehicle for change. A second group of respondents (24 percent) reported that MEEP has improved morale and improved the quality of work being done within schools, while other respondents provided comments related to new levels of information and

awareness, student achievement, instructional changes, and professionalism (23 percent). Some respondents (12 percent) reported that it's too early to gauge the impact of MEEP on schools, while others expressed that MEEP has had little or no effect at all on schools (12 percent).

- Impact of MEEP on long-term change in the state. One out of three respondents, approximately one-third of those who completed the question, indicated that MEEP has improved morale within schools across the state and improved the quality of work across Minnesota schools. A second group of respondents (26 percent) provided comments related to new levels of information and awareness across schools, greater student achievement, positive instructional changes, and increased professionalism. An additional group of respondents (22 percent) provided a variety of nonspecific positive comments related to MEEP -- some praised MEEP as the most positive educational change effort undertaken thus far in the state to improve the quality of education. An additional group of respondents (21 percent) reported, once again, that MEEP has provided schools and school personnel with a process and vehicle for change, i.e., provided them with a foundation for long-range planning. A small number of respondents (3 percent) reported that it's too early to estimate the impact of MEEP on schools across the state

Developing an Information-Tracking System

- One out of five respondents indicated that they did not know what types of information should be tracked. The largest group of respondents (30 percent) indicated that a variety of standardized tests should be used to track student achievement. A third group of respondents (27 percent) recommended a variety of attitude and climate surveys, while an additional group of respondents (15 percent) suggested tracking outcomes related to outcome-based education (OBE) and the state's proposed new graduation requirements. Another group of respondents (14 percent) warned against relying solely on traditional forms of standardized testing and indicated that MEEP should use a wide variety of measures and even develop new forms of assessment.

Recommendations

Given the findings of the evaluation, the following recommendations are offered:

- **Continue to fund/increase the legislative funding for MEEP.** All evidence from the evaluation suggests that MEEP has had a substantial impact on influencing long-term change within schools throughout Minnesota. More specifically, MEEP is being integrated into the long-term planning efforts of schools, its mission and role are clearly understood by schools, its procedures and products are easily incorporated, and schools that "stay the course" do achieve change.

- **Consider applying for validation through the National Diffusion Network (NDN).** Given its proven record, MEEP may want to consider applying to become a validated program of the NDN so that districts around the country could benefit from its record of success. The NDN's yearly program catalog, *Educational Programs That Work*, would provide a natural vehicle for dissemination of the MEEP process.

- **Conduct formative evaluation of MEEP's ongoing support systems.** Evidence collected during the evaluation suggests some implementation problems and lack of sufficient support for schools. Formative evaluation should be used to examine whether the level of ongoing support provided through MEEP's current structure/system is adequate, assess whether the current number and role of regional facilitators is sufficient for the number of schools now in MEEP, determine whether school teams trained at the seminars are adequately prepared to implement the MEEP process within their schools, and design a mechanism for ensuring MEEP's continuation in a school when team members change.

- **Develop an comprehensive ongoing evaluation process for tracking impact carefully.** The results of the evaluation make clear the relation of MEEP to long-term educational change in Minnesota. While it is both appropriate and important for MEEP to begin tracking student achievement, it is equally important to recognize that as a long-term educational process, it is unrealistic to expect sudden or drastic change in student achievement in a short time as schools enter the MEEP process. Consequently, such an ongoing information-tracking system best suited for evaluating MEEP's impact on student learning must not rely solely on traditional forms of standardized testing, but should couple a variety of existing measures with new forms of assessment as well.

The Design of the Evaluation

Role of Evaluation in Program Development and Implementation

While evaluation is primarily viewed as the process of determining the merit and worth of the object being evaluated, it is important to note the difference between the goal and role of an evaluation. The **goal** of an evaluation is to provide answers to the significant evaluative questions which have been raised, whereas the **role** of an evaluation refers to the ways in which those answers are used.[1] In this sense, the goal of conducting evaluation remains fairly constant across different evaluation contexts. However, the way in which evaluation information is collected and used can vary greatly in different evaluation settings.

Evaluators also make a distinction between formative and summative approaches to evaluation. Summative evaluations are aimed at determining the essential effectiveness of programs and are important to top administrators and funders in making decisions about the continuation of programs. A summative evaluation typically examines whether a project implemented the activities intended and the outcomes which have occurred. Evaluations of this type generally take place at the conclusion of a project/program or at a point when the project has had enough time to reach a reasonable level of stability.

On the other hand, formative evaluations focus on ways of improving and enhancing programs. A formative evaluation typically examines the clarity/focus of a project's goals and intended outcomes or looks for ways in which the operations of a program can be improved during the period of development. Formative evaluations can be conducted, not only in the initial stages of development, but at any point in the life of a project or program. They are generally most useful to the program administrators and staff directly involved with operating the program. This evaluation is an example of both.

Overview of CAREI

The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) is a collaborative research organization focused on combining the long-term school improvement efforts of the College of Education at the University of Minnesota with CAREI's 40 plus member school districts from across the state.

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[1] Scriven, Michael. "The Methodology of Evaluation." In B. R. Worthen & J. R. Sanders, *Educational Evaluation: Theory and Practice*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1973).

As the name suggests, CAREI conducts action research and practical studies that school-based educators can use directly to improve ongoing activities in their schools. CAREI's approach to conducting research and evaluation studies is focused on collaborative, action-oriented research with school practitioners involved in the development and implementation of research and evaluation projects. At the same time, CAREI involves research faculty from the College of Education who can provide the theoretical and technical expertise needed to make the research conceptually sound.

The notion of working collaboratively with public schools over time to build their research capacity is central to CAREI's mission, and we applied this orientation in developing the evaluation that follows.

Overview of MEEP

The Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program (MEEP) is a school-based program structured to improve the existing Minnesota educational system. MEEP has been funded in part by the Minnesota State Legislature and supported through resources provided by participating school districts. An Advisory Task Force, composed of educators throughout the state, serves as a policy-making body.

While the mission of MEEP is to enhance learning and instruction through planned change based on research, it is facilitated through ongoing school-based staff development processes supported and delivered through a network of local, regional, and state resources. The vehicle for change within MEEP is the school site itself. Change is implemented through the efforts of a site-based leadership team composed of the school's administrators, teachers, support staff, and/or parents. Each site's leadership team functions with a knowledge of and a commitment to long-term change.

A network of trainers is used to support the schools participating in MEEP. The MEEP support network includes other MEEP schools, regional facilitators, local site coordinators at the district level, and the MEEP staff at the Minnesota Department of Education. Each region of the state has an Educational Effectiveness Advisory Council composed of representatives from local sites, and a Statewide Advisory Committee exists comprising staff from each region. In addition, MEEP sponsors two major statewide conferences -- a winter conference and a leadership conference -- each year.

An initial pilot group involving 26 leadership teams was implemented during the 1984-85 school year to collect baseline data for MEEP. Since then, the program has continued to grow at a rate of approximately 100 new school sites a year with evaluation an integral part of the MEEP process. In 1991, seven years from MEEP's inception, a major impact evaluation of the program was sought for use both in the legislative session beginning in January, 1992, and in a planned revision/update of MEEP.

Purposes of the Evaluation

The overall purposes of evaluation were:

Phase I: Summative and Formative Evaluation of MEEP

- to determine the effectiveness of MEEP.
- to assess the impact of MEEP.
- to collect information related to developing an ongoing tracking system to determine the impact of MEEP on student learning.

The specific purposes of Phase I were:

Purposes Related to Evaluating the Effectiveness of MEEP

- to identify what aspects of MEEP have been going well and what aspects need to be changed.
- to identify what aspects of MEEP have been the most/least helpful.
- to determine the effectiveness of MEEP's current organization and administration.
- to determine what the perceived mission/role of MEEP is.

Purposes Related to Evaluating the Impact of MEEP

- to determine the perceived impact of MEEP on schools, school personnel, and students.
- to determine the perceived impact of MEEP towards stimulating long-term educational change.

Purposes Related to Developing an Information-Tracking System

- to identify the specific types of student achievement data that educators feel should be included in a meaningful information-tracking system.
- to collect preliminary information related to the type of tracking system best suited for evaluating MEEP's impact on student learning.

Phase II: Identifying a Process Tracking MEEP's Impact on Student Learning

- to develop an ongoing formative evaluation process for gathering, monitoring, and processing site information related to MEEP's impact on student learning.

The specific purposes of Phase II include:

- identifying the types of student achievement data that should be included in a meaningful information-tracking system.
- developing an ongoing information-tracking system best suited for gathering, monitoring, and processing site information related to MEEP's impact on student learning.

Evaluation Questions

Phase I of the evaluation revolved around the following sets of questions:

Questions Related to Evaluating the Effectiveness of MEEP

1. How is MEEP being implemented in schools?
2. What other types of change efforts are MEEP schools involved with?
3. What specific change outcomes do educators attribute solely to MEEP?
4. What aspects of MEEP are going well and what aspects need to be changed?
5. What aspects of MEEP have been the most/least helpful?
6. How effective is MEEP's current organization and administration?
7. What is the perceived mission/role of MEEP?

Questions Related to Evaluating the Impact of MEEP

8. What impact has MEEP had on schools, school personnel, and students?
9. What impact has MEEP had towards stimulating long-term educational change in schools?

Questions Related to Developing an Information-Tracking System

10. What specific types of student achievement data should be included in a meaningful information-tracking system?
11. What type of ongoing information-tracking system is best suited for gathering, monitoring, and processing site information related to MEEP's impact on student learning?

During Spring, 1992, Phase II will revolve around the following questions:

- What specific types of student achievement data should be tracked in an ongoing formative evaluation process?
- What ongoing information-tracking system is best suited for gathering, monitoring, and processing site information related to MEEP's impact on student learning?

General Approach to the Evaluation

Overall, Phase I of the MEEP evaluation used a case study approach and combined qualitative (structured telephone interviews and records analysis) and quantitative (survey instruments) data collection methods to gather the information needed to answer the evaluation questions. This type of an approach was information-sensitive enough to document the perceived effectiveness and impact of MEEP on Minnesota schools as well to obtain information for developing an ongoing formative evaluation process in Phase II of the project.

Phase I: Summative and Formative Evaluation of MEEP

The implementation of Phase I of the evaluation involved the development and administration of three basic data collection formats: a survey instrument, structured telephone interviews,

and records analysis. First, a **survey instrument** was constructed for up to 2300 educators from a stratified random sample of MEEP team members, MEEP team leaders, non-MEEP teachers, regional facilitators, CoLeaP participants, principals, superintendents, and other central office staff throughout the state of Minnesota. More specifically, the survey instrument was used to collect and document information related to:

- how MEEP is being implemented in schools.
- other types of change efforts that MEEP schools are involved with.
- the specific change outcomes educators attribute solely to MEEP.
- how MEEP interacts with the PER process and North Central accreditation.
- the aspects of MEEP that are going well and the aspects that need to be changed.
- the aspects of MEEP that have been the most/least helpful.
- the effectiveness of MEEP's current organization and administration.
- the perceived mission/role of MEEP.
- the impact that MEEP has had on schools, school personnel, and students.
- the impact that MEEP has had towards stimulating long-term educational change in schools.
- the specific types of student achievement data that educators feel should be included in an ongoing formative evaluation process focused on student learning.
- the type of ongoing information-tracking system best suited for gathering, monitoring, and processing site information related to MEEP's impact on student learning.

A follow-up postcard reminding respondents to return their surveys was mailed to all respondents ten days after the initial mailing had been sent. In addition, non-respondents received a second complete mailing one week later.

Second, **structured telephone interviews** were designed for up to 75 individuals from the same groups. These interviews were used to collect and document in-depth information related to:

- the specific change outcomes educators attribute solely to MEEP.
- how MEEP interacts with the PER process and North Central accreditation.
- the impact that MEEP has had on schools, school personnel, and students.
- the impact that MEEP has had towards stimulating long-term educational change in schools.
- what educators perceive the future of MEEP to be.

Finally, program-related **records and materials** were assessed for trends, problems, and related issues.

Phase II: Identifying a Process Tracking MEEP's Impact on Student Learning

Implementing Phase II of the evaluation will involve conducting a series of group planning meetings and/or discussions with MEEP staff, educators, and legislators throughout the state to begin developing an ongoing formative evaluation process. First, when Phase I of the evaluation has been completed, CAREI researchers and MEEP staff will work collaboratively:

- to identify a preliminary/possible set of student achievement outcomes to be included in an ongoing formative evaluation process.

- to synthesize and interpret Phase I results as they relate to an ongoing information-tracking system best suited for tracking information related to MEEP's impact on student learning.
- to recommend strategies for implementing a computer-based network system.

Second, two planning meetings and/or discussions with approximately 20 educators and legislators "knowledgeable with MEEP" will be scheduled to develop an ongoing formative evaluation process for gathering, monitoring, and processing site information related to MEEP's impact on student learning.

Project Findings

The evaluation data are presented as answers to three major questions posed in the evaluation design. The following questions are divided into a series of subtopics which provide a framework for presenting the findings:

- What are the demographics of the individuals involved in the evaluation?
- How effective has MEEP been?
- What impact has MEEP had on schools, school personnel, students, and towards long-term change?
- What specific types of student achievement data should be included in an information-tracking system and what type of information-tracking system should be implemented?

The first section of project findings, Demographics of Survey Respondents, focuses on the aspects of respondents' employment, their involvement in professional growth activities, and their current role in MEEP. Demographic information of the schools that the respondents are currently active in, as well as change activities, are also provided in this section. Information obtained in this section was obtained from survey information collected from individuals involved with MEEP.

The second section, The Effectiveness of MEEP, summarizes information related to the perceived mission of MEEP, how MEEP has been implemented, outcomes attributed solely to MEEP, aspects of MEEP which have been most and/or least helpful, and the effectiveness of MEEP's organization/structure. Information in this section was compiled from survey information gathered from individuals involved with MEEP as well as interview information gathered from MEEP personnel through telephone interviews.

The third section, The Impact of MEEP, presents information related to the impact of MEEP on schools, school personnel, and students. The impact of MEEP towards long-term change in schools and in the state system overall is also discussed in this section. This section presents information obtained from the survey of individuals involved with MEEP as well as information obtained from the telephone interviews conducted with MEEP personnel.

The last section of the project findings, Developing an Information-Tracking System, summarizes information related to the determination of the student achievement data which is to be tracked as well as the type of information-tracking system to be used. This section presents data collected from all of the information sources involved in the evaluation.

The answers to the questions posed in this study are based on the survey responses of 995 MEEP team members, regional facilitators, CoLeaP participants, principals, superintendents, and other central office staff throughout the state of Minnesota who returned usable surveys;

one-on-one telephone interviews with 46 individuals from the same groups. This is 43 percent of all personnel targeted to complete the survey and 67 percent of individuals scheduled to complete interviews.

While no differences were found between survey respondents and non-responders, generalizing results to a total population can be somewhat risky. We do not know the opinions and experiences of 1304 individuals who were mailed a survey, nor the reasons they did not return the inventory. However, when viewing the consistency of responses among survey respondents with information obtained from the one-on-one telephone interviews, we are inclined to assume they would be similar to those who did respond.

The following results are presented as the opinions and experiences of a sample of the total population of educational personnel regarding the Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Project. The following narrative summarizes the most common themes reflected in their comments. Any percentages reported have been determined by dividing the number of responses or comments on a specific theme by the total number of individuals who responded or provided comments to the specific question(s) identified. Throughout the following sections of the report, subgroup comparisons are discussed only when differences were found among groups.

Given the consistency of content and the sizeable number of respondents from around the state, the information presented here provides MEEP staff with a solid a base for revision of the program as well as support for many features of the current MEEP process. These data make clear the relation of MEEP to long-term educational change in Minnesota.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

To determine the extent to which MEEP has been effective and has had an impact on the various organizations and individuals involved with the project, it is vital to first understand the extent to which those labelled involved in MEEP are currently active in the process. For this reason, respondents were asked to provide a variety of demographic information for analysis purposes. The following sections present that information.

Employment Demographics

As a part of the survey, respondents were asked to provide information related to their current employment. Respondents were asked to indicate their current position, the number of years they have been employed in K-12 education, as well as the number of years they have held their current position.

Overall, the majority of respondents indicated they were principals/assistant principals (41 percent), teachers (37 percent), or superintendents (10 percent). Fewer respondents indicated they were other central office staff (6 percent) or non-certified staff (less than one percent). A detailed breakdown of their responses is provided in Table 1.

Respondents were also asked to provide information regarding the number of years employed in K-12 education. The vast majority of respondents indicated they have been involved in K-12 education for 11 or more years (91 percent). Less than one percent of respondents indicated

they had been involved in K-12 education for less than 2 years.

The survey also asked respondents to indicate the number of years they have been employed in their current position. Overall, 38 percent of respondents indicated they have been in their current position for 11 years or more, while only 14 percent had held their position for less than 2 years.

Table 1 - Employment Demographics

Aspect of Employment	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Current Position	964	100
Principal/Ass't Principals	393	41
Teachers	357	37
Superintendents	98	10
Other Central Office Staff	55	6
Other	55	6
Non-Certified Staff	1	-
Parents	5	-
Years in K-12 Overall	954	100
Less Than 2 Years	4	-
3 to 5 Years	25	3
6 to 10 Years	58	6
11 Years or More	867	91
Years in Current Position	964	100
Less Than 2 Years	130	14
3 to 5 Years	207	22
6 to 10 Years	248	26
11 Years or More	379	38

Involvement in Professional Growth Activities

Respondents were asked to provide information related to the number of separate professional growth activities (e.g., classes, workshops, seminars) they typically attend each year. Overall, most respondents indicated they attend 3 to 10 growth activities per year (72 percent). Somewhat surprising, 1 out of 5 respondents indicated that they typically attend 11 or more activities in a given year. A detailed breakdown of their responses is provided in Table 2.

School Demographics

As a part of the survey, respondents were asked to provide information related to their school. Respondents were asked to indicate the location of their school, the year that their school first joined MEEP, and the change activities their school is involved in.

Table 2 - Involvement in Professional Growth Activities

Number of Growth Activities	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
None	2	-
1 to 2 Activities	58	6
3 to 5 Activities	339	36
6 to 10 Activities	341	36
More than 10 Activities	214	22
Overall	954	100

Overall, the majority of respondents indicated that their school was located in greater Minnesota (66 percent). Twenty-four percent of respondents were from suburban schools and 10 percent indicated their school was located in an urban area. A detailed breakdown of responses is provided in Table 3.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the year that their school joined MEEP. The majority of respondents related that their school had been active in MEEP for 3 to 4 years or for 5 to

6 years (27 percent respectively). Fewer respondents indicated their school was a first year school (15 percent) or a 1984 pilot site for MEEP (6 percent).

The survey asked respondents to indicate which programs their school is currently involved with, in addition to MEEP. In general, the majority of respondents related that their school is involved with Planning, Evaluating, Reporting (PER) (88 percent), Assurance of Mastery (AoM) (85 percent), and Chapter I (78 percent). The programs which respondents indicated least frequently as being active in their schools include Outcomes Driven Developmental Model (ODDM) (13 percent), and differentiated staffing (4 percent).

Table 3 - School Demographics

Aspect of School	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Location of School	959	100
Greater Minnesota	632	66
Suburban	233	24
Urban	94	10
Year School Joined MEEP	883	100
First Year School	138	15
1 to 2 Years	220	25
3 to 4 Years	235	27
5 to 6 Years	235	27
1984 Pilot Site	55	6
Change Activities Involved In		
Planning, Eval, Reporting (PER)	830	88
Assurance of Mastery (AoM)	805	85
Chapter I	739	78
Site-based decision-making/mgmt	406	43
North Central Accreditation	320	34
District-initiated change efforts	309	33
OBE-grant from Minnesota SDE	176	19
High Success Consortium	160	17
Other	130	14
Outcomes Driven Develop. Model	126	13
Differentiated staffing	39	4

In general, the bulk of greater Minnesota schools have been in MEEP for 3 or more years while the majority of urban schools have been involved with MEEP 1 to 2 years. Overall, the majority of greater Minnesota schools were heavily involved in PER, AoM, and Chapter I. While suburban schools were also heavily involved in PER and AoM, they were, as could be expected, less involved in Chapter I, a program serving at risk youth. On the other hand, urban schools were the most heavily involved in Chapter I and site-based management/decision-making. A more detailed breakdown of change activities by location of school is presented in Table 4.

Current Role in MEEP

Respondents were asked to indicate their current role within MEEP. Overall, the majority of respondents related that they were either a MEEP leadership team member (49 percent) or a principal of a MEEP school (29 percent). Non-MEEP teachers and regional facilitators (1 percent respectively) were least frequently mentioned as roles of respondents. A detailed breakdown of responses in provided in Table 5.

The Effectiveness of MEEP

A central purpose of the Phase I evaluation activities was to identify the effectiveness of MEEP within and across the various MEEP schools. In particular, this purpose of the evaluation focused on the perceived mission of MEEP, how MEEP has been implemented in

Table 4 - Breakdown of MEEP and Other Change Activities by Location of School

	Greater Minnesota		Suburban		Urban		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Year School Joined MEEP	575	100	217	100	86	100	878	100
First Year School	50	9	59	27	28	32	137	15
1 to 2 Years	136	24	53	25	29	34	218	25
3 to 4 Years	186	32	37	17	12	14	235	27
5 to 6 Years	166	29	55	25	12	14	233	27
1984 Pilot Site	37	6	13	6	5	6	55	6
Change Activities Involved In								
Planning, Eval, Reporting (PER)	576	93	194	86	57	61	827	88
Assurance of Mastery (AoM)	549	88	199	88	53	57	801	85
Chapter I	517	83	151	67	67	72	735	78
Site-based decision-making/mgmt	232	37	106	47	65	70	403	43
North Central Accreditation	176	28	126	56	15	16	317	34
District-initiated change efforts	192	31	87	38	29	31	308	33
OBE-grant from Minnesota SDE	107	17	58	26	10	11	175	19
High Success Consortium activities	98	16	58	26	4	4	160	17
Other	74	12	35	15	19	20	128	14
Outcomes Driven Develop. Model	108	17	16	7	2	2	126	13
Differentiated staffing	17	3	17	8	5	5	39	4

schools, outcomes attributed solely to MEEP, aspects of MEEP judged the most/least helpful, and the effectiveness of MEEP's organizational structure. The information in this section of the evaluation was obtained from the results of the survey and one-on-one interviews from school personnel at MEEP schools and from several group discussions conducted with educators at the December, 1991 MEEP Winter Conference.

Perceived Mission of MEEP

In this section of the evaluation, a first question asked respondents to discuss what they perceive the mission and role of MEEP to be. Overall, 27 percent of respondents described MEEP as a general school improvement effort focused on the processes and/or operations of schools. Their comments were often associated with school effectiveness and general staff development/training. Some of their comments include:

> *Provide teachers, administrators with information and process techniques to make their schools effective.*
>
> *MEEP is a school improvement (educational) program based on the 15 characteristics of good schools with extensive training and ongoing support provided by regional facilitators.*
>
> *Help schools become more effective.*

The mission of MEEP is to stimulate growth, change, and improvement in Minnesota schools.

MEEP is designed to assist schools with instructional effectiveness and create conditions for success.

To develop and increase knowledge, skills and behaviors in staff development – student achievement, school climate, and any area the school may be affected by during the years.

Table 5 - Breakdown of Respondents by Current Role in MEEP

Current Role in MEEP	Number Mailed	Number Responding	Percent Responding
Local Coordinator	36	39	108
Regional Facilitator	14	12	86
MEEP Team Member	1030	612	59
Principal	632	355	56
Superintendent	243	96	40
Other Central Office	184	40	22
MATP/CoLeaP Participant	160	28	18
Other	-	45	-
Non-MEEP Teacher	-	17	-
Total Cases	2299	995	43

They provide the catalyst for school/individual growth and change.

The mission of MEEP at our school is to provide a vehicle for planned purposeful change in order to provide an effective learning environment for all learners.

A second group of respondents (22 percent) reported that they perceive MEEP to revolve around shared decision-making and participatory management. In general, their comments emphasized the "who" involved in the MEEP process of school operations, the expanded roles and empowerment of teachers, the involvement and participation of more stakeholders, and site-based decision-making. Some of their comments include:

To help teachers make decisions that affect them.

MEEP works to get teachers involved in the actual decision-making process which is to help provide ownership in districts' educational processes. It empowers teachers, especially the ones on the team, but this is to reach out to the whole staff.

To help empower teachers to make decisions that affect them.

To make decision-making a cooperative effort. To enable more people to be involved in decision making.

A process by which staff in a building evaluate their building's programs and procedures and set goals for improvement through a site-based decision-making process.

A third group of respondents (16 percent) described MEEP as essentially a process converged on problem-solving and critical analysis skills. Responses in this category often characterized MEEP as a process through which schools could learn how to analyze and evaluate

themselves, solve their own problems, identify their own strengths/weaknesses, and become a *learning organization*. Some typical comments include:

> *A process for assessing needs and making needed changes.*
>
> *MEEP is a process model, it helps identify and deal with decisions: What do I want, know, and believe.*
>
> *It is an agent which is designed to help initiate change and sensitize staff to weaknesses and strengths.*
>
> *MEEP is a research based decision-making process model designed to assist schools and help them make research-based decisions.*
>
> *MEEP has provided a process to examine what is being done in a building and how to improve.*
>
> *An opportunity for school personnel to become aware of and apply skills that help make their school a "learning organization."*
>
> *MEEP is a tool or instrument (process) that is used to provide direction for staff from the "awareness" stage to the "action" stage.*

Closely related to the previous point, an additional group of respondents (13 percent) described MEEP as either a process for planned change or as a vehicle for change. Within this framework, MEEP was depicted as a process through which any content of change could be accomplished. Some of their comments include:

> *A vehicle for planned change.*
>
> *Unclear at present. Originally a program - now process? Is it a vehicle for OBE or is it a process (generic) to drive change?*

An additional category of responses (12 percent) characterized MEEP's primary role as that of an information provider. In general, their comments were related to the use of research, outside consultants or facilitators, or other resources. Some of their comments include:

> *MEEP's role is to provide current research on characteristics of effective schools, provide training for school improvement models, and provide process to accomplish goals.*
>
> *To provide a research base, training, and a process to assist school improvement teams in school improvement efforts.*
>
> *A research-based change process to insure success for all students.*
>
> *A research-based guide for specific ways to organize professional staff for a cycle of improvement.*

MEEP is a process for the way a school runs based on 15 characteristics from effective schools research.

Other categories mentioned teaming, collaboration, and/or fostering better relations among staff, administration, or the broader community (9 percent); MEEP's emphasis on student learning and teacher empowerment (10 percent); improved climate/cultures within schools (4 percent); and long-range planning (2 percent). Comments related to these categories include:

A process that opens up communication between all administration and staff that allows us to cooperatively plan and be involved.

To bring staff, administration, and parents together to plan for an effective education for their students.

MEEP is one of the finest programs ever funded by the state in over 30 years. Our school uses it as the major method for communication between staff and administration.

The use of a research-based model has given teachers/administrators a different and more positive perception of educational change efforts.

To change our educational system in a positive, helpful way. Its role should be and, I feel is, to help students and school staff to pull together.

Provides teachers with the opportunity to update themselves professionally.

To encourage and affect teachers' attitudes and methods so as to improve education for all students.

How MEEP Has Been Implemented

In a second question within this section of the evaluation, respondents were asked to review how MEEP has been implemented at their school. While respondents often offered mixed and/or multiple comments to this question, their responses can be grouped in categories related to types of MEEP activities being implemented and the degree to which MEEP activities have been implemented.

Types of MEEP activities being implemented. Respondents indicated that MEEP has been implemented at schools in a number of ways. A majority of individuals (64 percent) reported that the "MEEP activities" occurring most frequently at their schools have been MEEP team meetings, leadership team meetings, and/or other types of site-based activities. In general, their responses emphasized either the team or site-based focus of MEEP efforts. A detailed breakdown of their responses to this question by region and years in MEEP is provided in Table 6. Some typical comments include:

Our leadership team identifies new ideas, works with staff, and decides on areas for change.

Our MEEP team meets on a regular basis to discuss curriculum type issues and keep the rest of the staff informed.

Table 6 - Breakdown of How MEEP is Being Implemented

Category	Greater Minnesota N	Greater Minnesota %	Suburban N	Suburban %	Urban N	Urban %	Total N	Total %
Degree Being Done*	471	66	159	24	73	11	673	100
Not At All	43	10	7	4	1	1	51	8
A Little, Some	170	39	82	52	36	49	288	43
Regularly (Monthly)	115	26	39	25	18	25	172	26
Regularly (Weekly)	113	26	39	25	20	27	172	26
Extensively, Completely	30	7	10	6	3	4	43	6
What is Being Done*	556	66	201	24	90	11	847	100
Meetings, Site-base, Ldrshp	350	63	129	64	59	66	538	64
Training, Staff Development	92	17	28	14	16	18	136	16
Survey/Applied Research	47	9	24	12	4	4	75	9
Goal Setting, Visioning	26	5	22	11	8	9	56	7
Individual Effort	7	1	-	-	2	2	9	1
Other	92	17	21	10	8	9	121	14

Category	Years In MEEP: 1st Year N	1st Year %	1-2 Years N	1-2 Years %	3-4 Years N	3-4 Years %	5-6 Years N	5-6 Years %	1984 Pilot N	1984 Pilot %
Degree Being Done*	100	16	156	25	152	24	185	29	39	6
Not At All	3	3	10	6	15	10	12	7	4	10
A Little, Some	62	62	74	47	61	40	71	38	13	33
Regularly (Monthly)	22	22	39	25	31	20	59	32	6	15
Regularly (Weekly)	19	19	37	24	46	30	40	22	16	41
Extensively, Completely	3	3	8	5	11	7	17	9	4	10
What is Being Done*	129	16	197	25	208	26	214	27	49	6
Meetings, Site-base, Ldrshp	70	54	119	60	133	64	149	70	34	69
Training, Staff Development	21	16	40	20	34	16	27	13	6	12
Survey/Applied Research	19	15	13	7	17	8	14	7	2	4
Goal Setting, Visioning	10	8	13	7	14	7	14	7	4	8
Individual Effort	3	2	-	-	3	1	1	-	1	2
Other	19	15	31	16	30	14	27	13	9	18

* All underlined values are based on the number of respondents involved.

The team plans staff development activities and facilitates other task focus.

Our MEEP team meets regularly and discusses a variety of issues that can be implemented to improve the overall quality of the building programs.

We have a leadership team which generally leads all staff development efforts and school improvement efforts.

A second group of individuals (15 percent) provided comments related to training and staff development. More specifically, this group reported that they had attended specific training and staff development activities as well as regional/state conferences which had either been a part of their school's *MEEP plan* or coordinated by the MEEP team at their school. Some of their comments include:

> *MEEP is attempting to keep the school on track, focused, and headed toward our vision. We design, create, and organize the staff development time using input from the MEEP process and staff members.*
>
> *Use of climate instrument and personal profile instrument as well as committees for teacher recognition.*
>
> *K-8 and 9-12 MEEP teams work together to identify staff development needs and strategies.*
>
> *ECSU sponsored workshops, locally sponsored in-services and workshops, and learning by doing.*

In other schools, respondents (9 percent) indicated that the efforts of school staff or MEEP teams have focused on various types of applied research activities used for action planning. Many of these efforts were often focused on either *climate issues* or used as general problem-solving or needs assessment strategies. Some typical comments include:

> *Through yearly evaluation of needs, project development, and committee organization to follow up goals. Committees meet 6 to 10 times yearly to implement goals.*
>
> *Our MEEP team gets input from staff and plans activities for improvement.*
>
> *Climate survey of staff in programs. MEEP team meets two times per month and continues to read and study as a group.*
>
> *Educational effectiveness team surveys faculty and sets school improvement focus for each school year.*
>
> *School-wide assessment- prioritize needs- collaborative effort.*

Other groups of respondents provided comments related to site-specific activities which could not be grouped into any of the previous categories (4 percent) or activities focused on goal-setting, mission building, or planning (7 percent). A small number of individuals (1 percent) described situations in which only a limited number of individuals had been trained or involved in the MEEP process. Some typical comments include:

> *We continue setting goals, attending workshops and developing our leadership team.*
>
> *We used MEEP ideas to help us set our school goals, to help us come up with the ways we do things, and to help us set up our organizational system.*

Our MEEP team is facilitating team building skills and knowledge of characteristics and the development of a mission.

Through activities involving process, vision, goal settings and, of course, celebration of successes and part successes.

It was stopped by the previous superintendent and is now just beginning to be revived.

I am the only trained person.

We were going very well. Then we lost our principal and original team and things have gone down hill ever since.

The degree to which MEEP activities have been implemented. Respondents also provided comments related to the degree to which MEEP activities have been implemented and/or used at their schools. Overall, a majority of respondents (52 percent) reported that their schools have been engaged in MEEP activities on a regular (weekly or monthly) basis. Half of respondents within this group provided comments which suggest that MEEP is up and running in their schools or that their schools are *over the hump*. Respondents also indicated that they are involved with, on the average, from two to four MEEP-specific activities a month at their schools. The second half of respondents within this first group indicated either that their schools were engaged in MEEP-specific activities once or twice a month or that there was a listing of activities that involved a modicum of commitment and effort.

The second largest group of respondents (43 percent) indicated that their schools have been engaged in MEEP activities on *a little* or *some* basis. Many of the responses within this group highlighted or described an obviously active group or process, but did not provide enough information to suggest that the activity occurs any more often than at some infrequent level.

A third group of respondents (6 percent) indicated that MEEP is used *extensively* or *completely* at their schools. This group included individuals from schools in which MEEP appears to be institutionalized and very much a part of the way things are now being done at the school.

A final group of respondents (8 percent) reported that MEEP was currently inactive at their school. Comments within this group were generally focused on themes related to *we've dropped out, it's no longer effective*, or *it's not being used in our school.*

Breakdown of MEEP activities and degree of change by location of school. In general, there were no major differences among urban, suburban, and greater Minnesota schools regarding types of MEEP activities implemented. While greater Minnesota schools tended to be more involved in training/staff development activities and site-specific activities than either urban or suburban schools, suburban schools were more frequently engaged in institutional research and self-study types of activities than the others. Urban schools tended to more involved with teams or site-based activities in their MEEP efforts. A detailed breakdown of their involvement is provided in Table 6.

On the other hand, there were some differences among urban, suburban, and greater Minnesota schools regarding the degree to which activities have been implemented. In general, greater Minnesota schools were more likely to have regular (weekly and monthly)

MEEP activities in place than were schools in the other two locations. However, 10 percent of respondents from greater Minnesota schools reported that their schools were inactive or that MEEP was no longer being used at their school. This dichotomy may suggest that stronger MEEP follow-up and/or support activities for schools having difficulties need to be developed and provided to schools in outlying areas. Twelve percent of respondents from both suburban and urban schools reported that MEEP activities have been implemented *a little* or *some*.

Breakdown of MEEP activities by length of time involved in MEEP. In general, there were a number of differences among the types of MEEP activities implemented at schools when broken down by length of time involved in MEEP. In general, the frequency of MEEP-related team meetings being implemented increased the longer a school had been involved in MEEP while the number of training/staff development activities decreased with time. Schools in their first year of MEEP tended to be more involved in applied research activities for action planning and/or goal setting. An additional breakdown of their responses can be seen in Table 6.

There were also a number of differences in the degree to which MEEP activities have been implemented in schools when examined by length of time involved in MEEP. Not surprising, schools new to MEEP tended to have the fewest number of MEEP activities implemented. On the other hand, schools with the greatest amount of institutionalized change in place were the schools that had been in MEEP the longest. Of special interest, the fifth and sixth year of the MEEP process appears to be the point at which MEEP's process activities have shifted from being just a set of ongoing monthly activities to an institutionalized weekly mechanism within schools. Figure 1 provides a graphic picture of frequency implemented by number of years in MEEP.

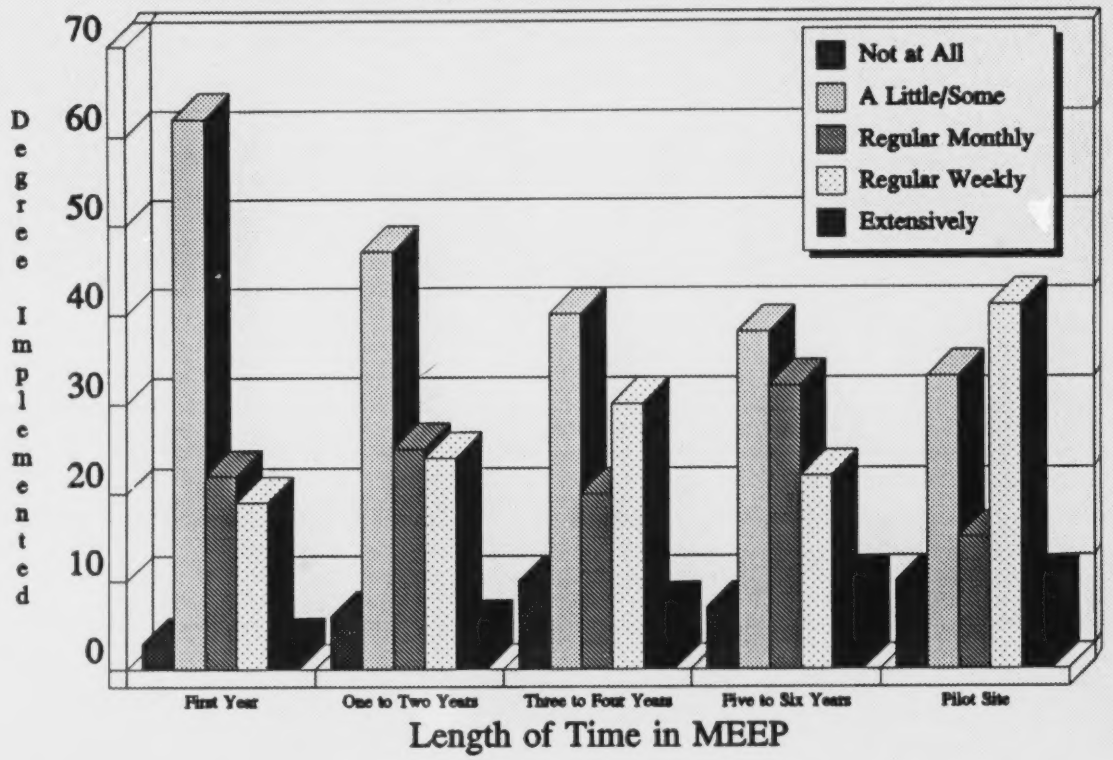
Breakdown of MEEP activities by degree of implementation. There were also a number of differences regarding the extent to which different types of MEEP activities have been implemented across schools. The largest percentage of activities being implemented "extensively" or "completely" were related to goal-setting. While training/staff development and applied research activities were the activities with the largest percentage being implemented on a regular weekly basis, MEEP team/site-based meetings and goal-setting activities were the ones with the largest percentage being implemented on a regular monthly basis. A detailed breakdown of their responses is provided in Table 7.

Aspects of MEEP the Most/Least Valuable

In this section of the evaluation, a fourth set of questions focused on the aspects of MEEP that have been the most/least valuable to respondents at their schools. In addition, they were asked to consider how they know whether the MEEP process has been working at their schools or not. Their responses to these questions are presented in the following three sections.

Aspects of MEEP the most valuable and helpful. The first question asked respondents to reflect on aspects of MEEP that have been the most valuable and/or helpful towards effecting change at their schools. While their responses to this question could have simply led to a lengthy laundry list of all the responses given by participants, their responses have been classified by either themes related to process, themes related to product, or by themes related to both.

Figure 1 - Frequency Implemented Broken Down by Length of Time in MEEP



Half of the respondents (48 percent) provided comments which described various MEEP processes. In particular, they mentioned processes associated with participative practices, models of change, and collaboration. A detailed breakdown of their responses is provided in Table 8. Some of their comments include:

> *MEEP has provided a means whereby staff members have accepted ownership for program growth and change of our schools.*
>
> *MEEP provides for shared decision making, increased ownership for decision-making, and a planned method for implementing change.*
>
> *For me, it's been the closeness I have felt with the other team members. We work well together. I think we've found some neat ongoing activities that have brought our staff closer and made them more tight knit.*
>
> *The involvement of staff in the process. I saw mature staff members become excited learners once again.*

Table 7 - Breakdown of What is Being Done by Degree of Implementation

Activities Being Implemented	Degree Implemented: Not at All	A Little, Some	Regularly Monthly	Regularly Weekly	Extensively, Completely	Total
Meetings, Site-base, Ldrshp Teams	2	161	135	130	34	419
Training, Staff Development	1	53	28	43	7	100
Survey/Applied Research	-	37	10	17	1	45
Goal Setting, Visioning	-	29	15	15	9	42
Individual Effort	-	5	1	1	1	8
Other	23	52	11	10	1	96
Overall*	26	291	175	174	43	654

* Overall values are based on the number of respondents involved.

A second group of respondents (27 percent) provided comments which described some product or outcome of MEEP activities. A number of their responses included skills acquired, changes in culture or relationships, improved relations among administrators and teachers, high quality conferences and training, and insightful staff development programs, etc. Some of their comments include:

Table 8 - Aspects of MEEP Rated Most Valuable by Location of School and Length of Time in MEEP

Aspects Rated Most Valuable	Greater Minnesota N	Greater Minnesota %	Suburban N	Suburban %	Urban N	Urban %	Total N	Total %
The Process	269	50	95	46	39	46	403	48
The Products/Outcomes	142	26	57	28	21	25	220	27
Both	131	24	53	26	25	30	209	25
Overall*	542	65	205	25	85	10	832	100

Aspects Rated Most Valuable	Years In MEEP: 1st Year N	1st Year %	1-2 Years N	1-2 Years %	3-4 Years N	3-4 Years %	5-6 Years N	5-6 Years %	1984 Pilot N	1984 Pilot %
The Process	56	49	91	47	117	55	91	43	20	41
The Products/Outcomes	30	26	55	28	49	23	62	29	14	29
Both	28	25	48	25	46	22	59	28	15	31
Overall*	114	15	194	25	212	27	212	27	49	6

* Overall values are based on the number of respondents involved.

The knowledge, the material you bring back to your school. You feel better about being a teacher after going through MEEP (self-esteem).

The training received on group process and decision making. It has gotten staff to think beyond their own classroom to building level needs.

Our teams find the winter and spring conferences a valuable time to meet with our regional directors and to attend timely workshops.

Our communications lines between staff-administration-school board.

The summer training for staff.

New leadership has emerged and facilitated the change process.

A final group of respondents (25 percent) provided comments which coupled various MEEP processes and products. Some of their comments include:

It's a great "package" of content and process. Group skills training was excellent.

At this point the training we've received has been most valuable. It gave us the knowledge and tools to implement the whole MEEP philosophy.

I was a good teacher before MEEP but I'm a more effective teacher because of MEEP.

Aspects of MEEP the least valuable and helpful. This question asked respondents to reflect on aspects of MEEP that have been the least valuable and/or helpful towards effecting change at their schools. Overall, 20 percent of respondents indicated that they could not think of any aspect of MEEP that has not been helpful to them or to their schools. Table 9 provides a detailed breakdown of their responses. Some of their comments include:

All of MEEP has been extremely valuable. We live and die by MEEP.

I can think of none. I believe the MEEP process, in total, is the most exciting development in education in Minnesota since I have been involved 30+ years.

When we became committed to MEEP, we tried to take everything and adapt it to the way we operate. In that respect it's all been valuable.

Every session that our group has gone to they have come back refreshed and excited.

One-third of respondents provided comments related to MEEP inservice/training and workshops. In general, the aspects mentioned most frequently were the poor quality of some presenters, boring and/or inappropriate presentation formats, overwhelming amounts of content in too short a time, and impractical research theory. Some of their comments include:

The huge notebook is overwhelming.

MEEP meetings at ECSU. The content hasn't been that stimulating so that I want to go.

Table 9 - Aspects of MEEP Rated Least Valuable by Location of School and Length of Time in MEEP

Aspects Rated Least Valuable	Greater Minnesota N	Greater Minnesota %	Suburban N	Suburban %	Urban N	Urban %	Total N	Total %
Facilitators/Content of Workshops	104	30	38	33	23	48	165	32
Lack of Resources for MEEP	72	21	29	25	12	25	113	22
Lack of Support	90	26	14	12	9	19	113	22
Lack of Progression with Issues	44	13	9	8	4	8	57	11
Lack of Resolution of Issues	24	7	2	2	4	8	30	6
All Aspects Have Been Helpful	66	19	32	28	6	13	104	20
MEEP is Inactive in Our Building	4	1	-	-	-	-	4	1
Overall*	352	68	116	23	48	9	516	100

Aspects Rated Least Valuable	Years in MEEP: 1st Year N	1st Year %	1-2 Years N	1-2 Years %	3-4 Years N	3-4 Years %	5-6 Years N	5-6 Years %	1984 Pilot N	1984 Pilot %
Facilitators/Content of Workshops	13	27	44	36	40	29	48	34	14	44
Lack of Resources for MEEP	11	22	29	24	33	24	31	22	5	16
Lack of Support	4	8	28	23	31	22	36	25	8	25
Lack of Progression with Issues	3	6	15	12	13	9	18	13	3	9
Lack of Resolution of Issues	3	6	6	5	11	8	8	6	1	3
All Aspects Have Been Helpful	18	37	23	19	29	21	23	16	3	9
MEEP is Inactive in Our Building	-	-	1	1	2	1	-	-	-	-
Overall*	49	10	122	25	140	29	143	29	32	7

* Overall values are based on the number of respondents involved.

Some of the "cutesy game" type activities that MEEP encourages.

Some of the sessions have been presented in an old style traditional lecture format.

The winter and spring training becomes somewhat repetitive.

A second group of respondents (22 percent) indicated that MEEP has taken resources away from other school activities. In general, they mentioned time taken for planning and staff development activities and money taken from other resources (e.g., staff development activities) and used for MEEP. Some of their comments include:

Unfortunately, for our district, the dollar cost for MEEP involvement have caused some of our other schools to bypass membership as discretionary dollars have been tight over the past several years.

We haven't been able to take advantage of as much in-service as we would like because of the cost of subs when sending the team.

Lack of support for new MEEP team members and for staff in transition was an aspect identified as least helpful by 21 percent of respondents. Many of these individuals commented on the need for follow-up support, a need for additional research and support for mature sites, and the polarization caused among school personnel for and against change. Some typical comments include:

Our district has not made training for new member teams a priority – I'm sure it would be good for us to attend.

MEEP has polarized a few of the faculty members who do not want change to happen.

To be successful, you need the week long team building experience. You learn to trust each other. New members are really outsiders, so trouble starts when new members come in as the old leave.

The leadership team's representatives are always changing and new members need to get the MEEP training as soon as they join the team. Team building is so important and must continually be developed.

Perceptions of some MEEP teams and staff of elite position causing artificial conflict with others involved in change efforts.

We have had some struggles with the changeover to new members and the blending of the team.

The concept of empowerment in our top down, autocratic power structure makes it a frustrating joke.

Some respondents indicated that MEEP doesn't move beyond climate issues (11 percent), while others reported that while MEEP is good at identifying issues within schools, it does little to resolve problems/issues (6 percent). Some typical comments include:

Yes, committee has been over-focused on climate issue instead of more important curriculum issues.

Yes, two years into the process we had instigated all these changes in climate and then could not get off the climate and into the instructional characteristics.

I wish they would move off climate to other factors.

The most focus has been on socializing. We seldom get past these events to really important issues.

Sometimes, we lose focus of our goal or what our goal is – we flounder.

The MEEP team has not been supportive of innovation and change generated outside of MEEP realm.

Community/parent involvement has not developed.

MEEP has not really pushed/helped people make significant changes.

Sometimes, I think we're not accomplishing a great deal.

How to know whether the MEEP process is working. As a final point within this section of the evaluation, educators were asked to consider how they know whether the MEEP process has been working at their school. The largest number of respondents (42 percent) indicated that, although there have been no formal efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of MEEP in their schools, individuals perceive things to have changed for the better within schools. In general, their comments were related to the empowerment of teachers, positive attitudes towards teaching and students, and increased levels of staff involvement. Some of their comments include:

I can feel it. People are happier because they now have input and because administration supports our needs and has "changed" for the good.

Many teachers feel more "powerful" and that we have a say in what's happening. It's not just an order from on high – communicating is a big problem.

Things are getting done. People feel better. Trust has improved.

Our building has a positive attitude and a sense of collegiality which has developed over the last 7 years. We have pulled together to spearhead building restructuring and OBE curriculum development.

We have experienced staff unity and a willingness by more staff members to be involved in school improvement efforts.

One-third of respondents (30 percent) reported that effective MEEP teams/committees, increased staff collegiality, improved problem-solving skills, and expanded networks were indications that MEEP is working. Some typical comments include:

Our MEEP team publishes a list of accomplishments at various intervals.

We've seen growth in collegiality; improved meetings (as far as getting things done); growth in communication; growth in initiating programs.

We have a school that worked to accomplish goals effectively before we joined MEEP but with MEEP we have a group who has used leadership skills to effectively use talents of teachers on task force.

Problems that staff would complain to other staff members are brought to MEEP team for a feasible solution.

A third group of respondents (18 percent) indicated that the positive feedback being received from school personnel was an indication that MEEP has been working. A number of these individuals provided comments related to discussions they have been involved with. Some of their comments include:

> *People have a say. When issues are now brought up we all are given a part – we discuss and come to consensus on many issues.*
>
> *The staff feels part of the decision-making process because they are involved in decisions. How do I know how they "feel"? Listen to them. Lounge bitching has decreased.*
>
> *Feedback from staff.*

Other respondents (17 percent) described various formal evaluation processes (e.g., surveys, feedback inventories, climate studies, etc.) that have been implemented at their schools. While some of these evaluation efforts were one-time occurrences, it was evident that others are ongoing processes. Some of their comments include:

> *By observation and survey we can see that climate has improved.*
>
> *The initiatives that have been completed in parental involvement, order and discipline, curriculum articulation, and school climate have all been evaluated formally through surveys and staff meetings. The feedback indicates success and improvement areas.*
>
> *We are continually evaluating, processing, watching, listening, and asking lots of questions.*
>
> *Formation evaluation accomplishes this, but it is hard to get people interested. That is mainly because educators do not have a complete appreciation for evaluation. They hate evaluation because for years they system has made them feel insecure.*

Still yet, other respondents (14 percent) suggested that the general enthusiasm for MEEP at schools was evidence alone that MEEP has worked. Some of their comments include:

> *Students are aware of the MEEP efforts. They love the opening day workshop and are always asking "What are you going to do next year?" They have many suggestions.*
>
> *Enthusiastic support at MEEP building, committees and activities.*
>
> *I see teachers who were very opposed to change looking at OBE with an open mind. The MEEP people have informed others about OBE. They are no longer in the dark.*
>
> *We've received positive feedback about certain goals we've set and reached. Our faculty seem to be more willing to try something new.*

Some individuals reported that MEEP hasn't worked or at best had limited success (9 percent), while others referred to the overall general improvement of MEEP (8 percent). Some typical comments include:

It's been off to a slow start because our team tried to do too much and got overwhelmed and shut down. We are re-tracking now.

Fair to poor – still no direction – friction between top level administrator and leadership team.

We make a decision or present a need – there's no follow through. It isn't working.

We have a list of accomplishments but are currently struggling with how MEEP fits into the overall operation of our school. We are currently restructuring for clearer direction and better effectiveness.

Presently, we are spinning our wheels with a concern where the administration wants the leadership roles to reside.

Some problems we had in the past are no longer with us.

See evidence of a new direction.

Things are functioning well!

We have not taken time to think about negative aspects. There are enough positives to keep us headed toward our vision.

I think it has been working by all that we have accomplished.

Outcomes Attributed Solely to MEEP

A third set of questions within this section of the evaluation asked respondents to delineate, from their perspective, outcomes and changes in schools which could be attributed solely to the MEEP process. More specifically, this portion of the evaluation sought to differentiate change-related activities and/or processes unique to MEEP's change process as well as identify specific outcomes which could be attributed solely to MEEP. The findings are presented in the following two sections.

Activities distinguishing MEEP. The first question asked respondents to describe activities at their schools that distinguish MEEP from other change/improvement activities being implemented at their schools. Because there was a wealth of replies describing the various activities, levels of involvement, and things that people were doing, their responses have been categorized into a who, what, and how scheme.

The largest group of respondents (37 percent) reported that MEEP's inclusiveness has set it apart from other types of change-related activities at their schools. In general, their comments were related to the expanded role of school staff (teachers and administrators), the inclusion of broad groups of stakeholders (students, parents, and community members) in school processes focused specifically on change and improvement, and/or the role of the facilitator in the change process. Table 10 provides a detailed breakdown of their responses. Some of their comments include:

Table 10 - Breakdown of Activities Distinguishing MEEP by Location of School and Length of Time in MEEP

Distinguishing Activities	Greater Minnesota N	Greater Minnesota %	Suburban N	Suburban %	Urban N	Urban %	Total N	Total %
Inclusiveness (who's involved)	192	38	65	36	21	30	278	37
Content (what we're doing)	134	27	49	27	17	24	200	27
Process (how we go about working)	129	26	64	35	26	37	219	29
Other	62	12	16	9	8	11	86	11
Overall*	501	66	183	24	71	9	755	100

	Years In MEEP: 1st Year		1-2 Years		3-4 Years		5-6 Years		1984 Pilot	
Distinguishing Activities	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Inclusiveness (who's involved)	51	48	71	40	64	35	62	31	16	38
Content (what we're doing)	15	14	47	26	46	25	62	31	12	29
Process (how we work)	36	34	50	28	56	31	55	28	11	26
Other	10	9	18	10	20	11	26	13	5	12
Overall*	107	15	179	25	181	26	199	28	42	6

* Overall values are based on the number of respondents involved.

The use of task forces as opposed to committees in working on an area of concern by the majority of the staff rather than by just a few.

MEEP activities will be determined by staff rather than administration. Hopefully, everyone will consider them necessary and worthwhile so that, consequently, changes will be more meaningful.

We are an ongoing committee who actively work on team building skills and coordinating school activities.

The task force committees involve everyone. All staff members have been on at least one task force committee.

MEEP activities are provided by staff members for staff members. Staff owns the process – everyone is involved.

Principals realize that they're working with a team.

A second group of respondents (29 percent) identified MEEP's process as a factor that has distinguished MEEP from other types of change-related activities. Although this group's responses were generally more varied than the previous ones, they often described the quality

of MEEP activities and the comprehensiveness of the MEEP process as aspects which have set MEEP apart from other change efforts. Some of their comments include:

It hasn't "gone away." After 6 years, I'm a firm believer.

Other activities have usually been incorporated into MEEP. It's perceived as long-term.

MEEP has been a collaborative approach to change and improvement as contrasted to board or administrative directive.

The use of MEEP facilitator using 15 characteristics.

We are thinkers (visionaries), dreamers that listen to the staff and their needs. Help to supply information resources for them so that they can make the change and be involved in the action plans.

The activities set up by MEEP seem to balance the staff's responsibility.

Team planning. Staff input. Activities to improve school climate.

MEEP is the process we used for change. These are not separate.

It was successful. Teachers took charge and supported it.

MEEP has lasted longer than anything else. Everything seems to fit under the umbrella of MEEP characteristics.

The content of the MEEP process/activities was identified by a third group of respondents (26 percent) as a factor separating MEEP from other change-related activities. In general, their comments were related to activities that schools and staff have been involved in, e.g., goal-setting, training/conferences, surveys, group planning, problem-solving, and decision-making. Some of their comments include:

The leadership team, the state-wide training, and the climate component.

School mission statement. School focus for development. Working as a team for "special days" for students. Positive feeling for each individual in building.

MEEP concerns itself primarily with topics not associated with grade level or curriculum.

Climate issues are still exclusively MEEP. The lines are becoming more blurred.

Our MEEP activities have empowered the staff – team building activities have helped us work together effectively.

Collaborative plans – unit meetings team planning of teachers evaluation system.

School climate survey. Site based decision making.

It has had a very positive effect on our school climate.

Outcomes attributed solely to MEEP. The second question asked respondents to identify outcomes at their schools which could be attributed solely to MEEP. Once again, their responses were varied and mixed. Overall, the largest number of responses (47 percent) was related to the effectiveness of various MEEP processes. More specifically, they mentioned outcomes associated with enhanced goal-setting, site-based management, decision-making, expanded leadership, and improved communication. Some of their comments include:

A networking of schools working together to implement change toward more effective schools.

I think the greatest benefit has been the state-wide forums – the knowledge that others are involved in the same process.

The incision of a "process" team in our organizational structure that looks at how and why we do things the way we do.

A second group of respondents (37 percent) identified specific goals that their schools had attained, increased levels of awareness and knowledge, and changed teaching methods. Some typical comments include:

The realization that the school is changing and will continue to change in spite of individual efforts to thwart change.

Parent involvement in decisions concerning various school functions.

Higher student expectations.

The results of the process at [our school] include: revised grading and discipline, school climate improvements, scheduling revisions, in-service on change, and school research and programs for diversity and interdisciplinary instruction.

Our new advisor/advisee program was initiated, developed, researched, and written through our MEEP process. We are the only elementary school to use this type of middle school approach to teaching affective ed., and citizenship, etc. in a multi-age setting.

A third group of respondents (27 percent) referred to improved morale in schools, joint ownership of change and/or improvement among teachers and administrators, commitment to change, and improved attitudes as outcomes attributable to MEEP. Some of their comments include:

Changes in collegiality, changes in communication, changes toward the focusing of our school life to the needs of the children – not our needs.

The involvement of more people, representing more groups on a more involved basis.

Teachers have said they have for the first time felt some ownership in the school.

Freedom of staff to verbalize feelings about our school and themselves professionally.

While a small number of respondents indicated that there were no outcomes unique to MEEP (10 percent), others reported that they either didn't know of any outcomes unique to MEEP (5 percent) or that it was too early to know the impact of the MEEP process (5 percent). Some typical comments include:

Too early. By the end of this year we will have an action plan for improvement. This first year has been more of an assessment – sharing year.

Still in the woods.

None. They've done absolutely nothing.

I feel our school was doing MEEP type goals and "committee" planning before MEEP. We would have been successful either way.

Difficult to identify what is "solely" attributable. I am confident that our school climate and peer support of one another, risk taking in change can be attributed largely to MEEP efforts.

I don't think you can attribute any changes solely to any one thing. School is too complex to be able to break it into component parts.

Extent of Change and MEEP's Influence on Change

A separate section of the survey was designed to determine the extent to which different aspects of change have occurred at schools as well as MEEP's role in facilitating change. First, using a seven-point scale (1=Not Occurring; 7=Consistently Occurring), respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which a variety of aspects of change were occurring at their schools. Second, using a second seven-point scale (1=Little or No Measurable Influence; 7=Significant Influence), respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which MEEP has influenced the change process for each aspect of change. Overall, the average responses were relatively high, ranging from 4.2 to 5.7 for the extent of change, and from 4.5 to 5.9 for the influence of MEEP. Tables 11 and 12 provide a detailed breakdown of the information presented in the following two sections.

Extent of Change Occurring. Overall, respondents indicated that the involvement of the principal (mean=5.6) and positive experiences as members of MEEP leadership teams (mean=5.7) were aspects of change occurring the most. On the other hand, they reported that the allocation of time and money to support school improvement efforts (mean=4.7) and the allocation of in-school planning time to work on school improvement activities (mean=4.2) were aspects of change occurring the least.

In general, there were few differences among greater Minnesota, suburban, and urban schools regarding aspects of change occurring. However, suburban schools rated the involvement of principals (mean=5.9) and positive experiences as members of MEEP leadership teams (mean=6.0) somewhat higher than the other two groups of schools. Urban schools rated the allocation of resources (mean=4.2) and allocation of in-school time for planning (mean=3.9)

Table 11 - Breakdown of Mean Change Occurring and Mean Influence of MEEP by Location of School

Extent of Change/Influence of MEEP	Greater Minnesota Mean	N	Suburban Mean	N	Urban Mean	N	Total Mean	N
Extent of Change								
Team membership/positive experience	5.6	577	6.0	217	5.8	86	5.7	880
Involvement of the principal	5.5	585	5.9	218	5.7	86	5.6	889
Support of the building staff	5.2	587	5.4	218	5.2	87	5.2	892
Knowledge & skills/leadership team	5.2	582	5.3	215	5.2	87	5.2	884
Leadership team's access to supports	5.0	575	5.2	217	5.2	86	5.1	878
A known, shared plan	4.8	579	5.1	218	5.1	86	4.9	883
Allocation of resources	4.8	579	4.7	216	4.2	87	4.7	882
In-school time allocated for planning	4.2	587	4.3	219	3.9	87	4.2	893
Influence of MEEP								
Team membership/positive experience	5.8	577	5.9	219	5.9	83	5.9	879
Knowledge & skills/leadership team	5.5	579	5.6	216	5.5	85	5.5	880
Involvement of the principal	5.4	574	5.6	216	5.4	85	5.4	875
Leadership team's access to supports	5.2	567	5.4	214	5.6	83	5.3	864
Support of the building staff	5.3	580	5.3	215	5.0	85	5.2	880
A known, shared plan	5.2	573	5.4	215	5.2	86	5.2	874
Allocation of resources	5.0	571	4.9	209	5.1	82	5.0	862
In-School time allocated for planning	4.5	578	4.6	216	4.3	84	4.5	878

Extent of Change: 1=Not Occurring, 7=Consistently Occurring
Influence of MEEP: 1=Little or No Measurable Influence, 7=Significant Influence

somewhat lower than the other two groups of schools.

There were also few differences among schools when examined by the length of time in MEEP. However, first year schools rated having a known, shared plan for school improvement (mean=4.6) and allocation of in-school time for planning (mean=4.0) somewhat lower than other schools. Somewhat surprising, first year schools and schools in their fifth/sixth year of MEEP rated the involvement of principals and positive experiences as members of MEEP leadership teams somewhat higher than other schools with means ranging from 5.7 to 5.9.

Influence of MEEP. When asked to indicate the extent to which MEEP has influenced the change process at their schools, respondents reported that MEEP has influenced and/or provided positive experiences for members of the leadership teams (mean=5.9), provided leadership team members with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and implement a school improvement program (mean=5.5), and influenced the involvement of principals in implementing school improvement activities (mean=5.4).

In general, there were few differences among greater Minnesota, suburban, and urban schools regarding the perceived influence of MEEP. While urban schools rated MEEP's influence on the allocation of in-school time for planning (mean=4.3) somewhat lower than other schools, they rated MEEP's influence of the leadership team's access to support systems (mean=5.6)

Table 12 - Breakdown of Mean Change Occurring and Mean Influence of MEEP by Length of Time in MEEP

	Years in MEEP									
	1st Year		1-2 Years		3-4 Years		5-6 Years		1984 Pilot	
Extent of Change/Influence of MEEP	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Extent of Change										
Involvement of the principal	5.7	120	5.5	206	5.4	227	5.8	221	5.9	53
Team membership/positive exp	5.8	117	5.7	206	5.6	226	5.9	218	5.9	53
Support of the building staff	5.1	117	5.2	208	5.0	228	5.5	224	5.4	53
Knowledge & skills/ldrshp team	5.3	117	5.2	206	5.1	229	5.4	220	5.3	51
A known, shared plan	4.6	116	5.0	205	4.8	227	5.2	222	5.2	53
Allocation of resources	5.1	114	4.6	205	4.4	227	4.8	221	4.9	53
Ldrshp team's access to supports	5.4	116	5.3	206	5.0	227	5.0	220	4.7	51
Time allocated for planning	4.0	119	4.1	207	4.0	230	4.3	223	4.3	53
Influence of MEEP										
Involvement of the principal	5.5	117	5.5	204	5.3	223	5.5	219	5.5	53
Team membership/positive exp	5.9	119	5.8	205	5.8	226	6.0	218	6.1	52
Support of the building staff	5.2	114	5.3	207	5.0	225	5.6	221	5.2	53
Knowledge & skills/ldrshp team	5.6	117	5.5	204	5.3	227	5.7	221	5.5	51
A known, shared plan	5.2	113	5.2	203	5.2	227	5.4	221	5.4	53
Allocation of resources	5.6	107	4.9	201	4.7	221	4.9	221	5.2	53
Ldrshp team's access to supports	5.7	115	5.3	202	5.2	223	5.3	215	5.1	50
Time allocated for planning	4.5	116	4.4	204	4.4	225	4.7	221	4.6	53

Extent of Change: 1=Not Occurring, 7=Consistently Occurring
Influence of MEEP: 1=Little or No Measurable Influence, 7=Significant Influence

somewhat higher than other schools. Suburban schools rated the involvement of their principals (mean=5.6) somewhat higher than other schools.

The 1984 pilot study schools and schools in their fifth/sixth year of MEEP rated MEEP's influence on positive experiences for leadership teams somewhat higher than other schools (means=6.1 and 6.0 respectively), while schools in their fifth/sixth year of MEEP rated the knowledge and skills provided to develop and implement a school improvement program (mean=5.7) somewhat higher than other schools.

Special Concerns Regarding the MEEP Process

A final set of question within this section of the evaluation asked school personnel to comment on aspects of MEEP's basic organizational structure. In particular, they were asked to discuss the extent to which the MEEP research base has been used at their schools and whether their schools had experienced a "hit bottom" phase in the change process. Their responses to these questions are presented in the following two sections.

Use of the MEEP research base. The first question asked respondents to describe the extent to which the MEEP research base has been used at their schools. Overall, 14 percent of respondents indicated that the research base is used in most of the decision processes around

change and improvement. In part, this came through in the application of MEEP's "15 characteristics." A detailed breakdown of their responses is provided in Table 13. Some of their comments include:

I feel that we use this a lot. Both of our administration and a few of the other MEEP members are very well read and research-based – research is often being cited.

We attempt to legitimize all of our MEEP initiated school improvement projects by seeing that they have a basis in research.

All change-related activities must have a rationale based in research.

The research base is used for goals and mission – whole group/ non-grouping – coop groups – learning style – parent communications, site based decisions – gosh – most things.

Table 13 - Use of Research Base by Location of School and Length of Time in MEEP

Extent to Which Research Base is Used	Greater Minnesota N	Greater Minnesota %	Suburban N	Suburban %	Urban N	Urban %	Total N	Total %
Not at All	47	10	10	6	5	7	62	9
Rarely, Seldom	93	19	29	17	14	19	136	18
Sometimes	191	38	69	40	26	36	286	39
Often	108	22	26	15	17	23	151	20
Almost Always	58	12	38	22	11	15	107	14
Overall*	497	67	172	23	73	10	742	100

Extent to Which Research Base is Used	Years In MEEP: 1st Year N	1st Year %	1-2 Years N	1-2 Years %	3-4 Years N	3-4 Years %	5-6 Years N	5-6 Years %	1984 Pilot N	1984 Pilot %
Not at All	10	9	19	11	16	9	10	5	2	4
Rarely, Seldom	26	25	25	14	37	21	39	20	4	9
Sometimes	40	38	71	40	66	37	83	43	13	28
Often	21	20	35	20	36	20	41	21	10	22
Almost Always	9	9	27	15	22	12	22	11	17	37
Overall*	106	15	177	25	177	25	195	28	46	7

* Overall values are based on the number of respondents involved.

A second group of respondents (21 percent) reported that the research base was used "often." Responses which stated the frequency of use such as "often" or "many of our decisions" were included in this group. Some of their responses include:

We are aware of new research articles in professional journals monthly.

It is the touchstone to check efficacy of any change.

When we have task forces for a specific area, that group depends on research to make its decision.

We have used the research base as the impetus for change and improvement.

Data based on research serves as the guide prior to group processes and during group processes.

We refer to the research for the characteristic(s) we are focusing on in presenting concepts to staff.

We are very aware of the research and keep it in mind when planning.

MEEP provided the research on organizational and instructional characteristics to facilitate planned change.

"Sometimes" was, to a certain extent, a default third category for the largest category of responses (38 percent). A number of various applications of research were described in this category where it was evident that the research was used at least sometimes. Some typical comments include:

We do try to follow the MEEP process in making some school decisions. We do not always do that.

We use ECSU to help when we get stuck. They have what has worked elsewhere.

The leadership team has used research in presentation and in facilitating our cooperative learning education.

It is quoted and relied on in decision making situations.

It is used to a certain extent, but not as much as it probably should be.

The research base is used to identify areas of improvement and managing change.

Used as a base for discussion and decision making.

Somewhat, we use the processes and access the information base in language immersion.

A fourth group of respondents (19 percent) provided comments which suggest that the research base is rarely or seldom used at their schools. This category mostly fit the response type of "we don't use it as much as we should" or "very little." Some of these comments include:

Not stressed enough. Not extensively.

Our team is new and probably needs more focus and research for support.

Very little.

Limited. Research is important, but so is knowledge of our particular school's make-up and needs.

Very little at this point since we are working on school climate at this time.

It has not been used other than giving the individual profiles.

A final group of respondents (8 percent) provided comments which indicate that the research base hasn't been used at all. Some of their responses include:

None.

It isn't.

I am not aware the research base is directly addressed.

A "hit bottom" phase of the MEEP process. The second question asked respondents whether their school had experienced a time moving forward when they had "hit bottom" and, if so, to elaborate on what had happened. While 42 percent of respondents indicated that they had not experienced a "hit bottom" at their school, 58 percent of schools reported that they had "hit bottom" at some point. Of those that reported such an experience, many reported multiple and mixed reasons as to why they perceived the experience to have happened.

A first group of respondents (24 percent) indicated that they had had difficulty in planning, designing, and implementing goals at their school due to indecision, lack of support, and limited commitment to the process. Some of their comments include:

Yes, happens when plans are made – goals are formed – and there is no administrative and/or financial backing to make it possible.

When a scheduled activity doesn't go as planned, it is like, why do we even try?

We've had difficulty with the staff ownership in this process.

Yes, there have been times when developing a plan of action, the team felt frustrated and progress was very slow.

When staff morale is down due to negotiations, mounting social concerns in the classroom, and increasing class sizes, MEEP can easily take a back seat if allowed.

Yes, we're there, feeling like we have no focus. MEEP team members feel "worn out" and don't want to "add" anything else as is the feeling of the rest of the staff.

A second group of respondents (24 percent) reported that they have experienced a variety of plateaus and/or cycles that have gone from *stalled out* to *stale* to *rejuvenated.* Some of their comments include:

> *Yes, we have stalled out at different times in each building. The building principals' commitment seem to coincide with the swings up and down.*
>
> *We hit bottom continuously. It's part of change. We regroup and go back to the mission.*
>
> *There are times when things slow down and goals don't get met because of the tremendous time constraints.*
>
> *Yes, in second year – a long time ago. In group and out group developed. No problem now.*
>
> *It happens continually, a "rollercoaster effect."*
>
> *I wouldn't say "hit bottom," but we have had peaks and valleys.*

A third group of respondents (13 percent) conveyed that they haven't been able to get MEEP off the ground due to the *stigma of MEEP* and its association with traditional leadership in the building. While a few respondents provided comments related to lack of time (2 percent), only 1 percent of respondents reported that things at their school had been better before MEEP had been implemented. Some of these comments include:

> *Yes, our process for change has broken down due to "stepped on toes" of superintendent and school board.*
>
> *Team members' enthusiasm waned. We were perceived as principal's mouth pieces.*
>
> *There was some enthusiasm for MEEP for about 2 years, since than it is virtually dead here.*
>
> *We have such a small staff and so many roles, it's hard to find time.*
>
> *We don't use MEEP like we used to because of funding.*
>
> *Yes, the staff become buried in the realities of teaching and building or district mandates.*
>
> *I'll tell you next year. We are at the bottom now.*
>
> *No, things were better before MEEP*
>
> *I'm not sure. We were close to the bottom when we started the MEEP process, everything from there seems upward.*

The Impact of MEEP

A second purpose of the evaluation focused on the impact of MEEP. While the first phase of this section of the evaluation examined the impact of MEEP on schools, school personnel, and students, the second section probed for the impact of MEEP towards long-term change. The information obtained in this section of the evaluation was obtained from the results of the survey and one-on-one interviews with school personnel at MEEP schools and from several group discussions conducted with educators at the December, 1991 MEEP Winter Conference.

Impact of MEEP on Schools

A first question within this section of the evaluation asked school personnel to infer, from their perspective, the impact of MEEP on their school. A first group of respondents (58 percent) indicated that MEEP has had a positive impact on their schools. In particular, they provided comments related to professional renewal of staff, increased cohesion among staff, improved levels of collegiality, and increased teamwork. Some typical comments include:

After initial rejection, I think staff can see some value.

Very positive.

Some – they appreciate some of the things that the team has done.

It has had a positive impact on morale.

We have grown.

Clearly rejuvenated them, has made them feel more important, involved and responsible.

We have worked hard to build a sense of community within our school.

MEEP make us more aware of what we were already doing.

There is more a sense of "we are all in this together" and a more professional attitude.

The next largest group of respondents (19 percent) provided comments related to staff empowerment and the value of having a process for solving problems. In general, they indicated that MEEP has given them a systematic framework to process problems and find solutions. Some of their comments include:

Knowledge base and process for involvement.

Feeling of involvement and process for input.

An ability and desire to work together, in a team effort, for change.

A third group of respondents (17 percent) reported that MEEP has given them the opportunity to experiment with innovative instructional methods and encouraged staff to explore change. Some of their comments include:

The staff is beginning to experience the value of planned change through MEEP.

More ready to accept change and growth.

A better, broad understanding of the change process and how research can and should be used to bring about change.

More and more teachers are seeing the need and the reality that effective change is possible.

A fourth group of respondents (11 percent) provided a variety of comments related to positive changes in school climate and staff morale. A number of respondents reported that their school atmosphere has improved significantly. Some of their comments include:

Better attitude. Teachers are more professional and it has rubbed off on the students.

Dialog. An ability to focus on more of the "good stuff" instead of all the things that need "fixing."

Only a comparatively small number of individuals reported that MEEP has had a divisive and/or negative impact on their school (6 percent), or that MEEP has had little or no impact on their school (7 percent). Some typical comments include:

MEEP angered them by suggesting they could impact something.

In some cases, it made people feel jealous that they weren't on leadership team.

Impact of MEEP on School Staff

A second question within this section of the evaluation asked school personnel to discuss the impact that MEEP has had on them personally and professionally. The responses to this question were often similar to those related to the impact of MEEP on the school, suggesting that people viewed these impacts similarly. The data were, however, analyzed separately.

A first group of respondents (47 percent) indicated that MEEP has had a positive impact on the staff at their schools. Once again, they provided comments related to professional renewal of staff, increased cohesion among staff, improved levels of collegiality, and increased teamwork. Some typical comments include:

Gave us hope that we could grab a hold and improve.

It has helped to make it look like a professional place with students as a focus.

It has brought new life to some of our staff.

Brought staff closer together to share concerns of "whole" picture.

A second group of respondents (25 percent) reported that MEEP has given staff the opportunity to explore ownership of change and understand how change can be brought about. Some of their comments include:

In 32 years in public education, I personally feel that MEEP has by far done more to improve our school than all the other programs combined.

Positive, identified and focused on what we're doing right.

We've improved communication with community and parents.

Excellent impact. We are able to move along with change as a growth process.

There is a clearer overall plan, better long-range planning, better public relations, and focused attention on change.

Increased awareness of instructional techniques and presentation of material.

The next largest group of respondents (17 percent) provided comments related to staff empowerment and the value of having a process for solving problems. Once again, respondents commented on the systematic framework MEEP has given them to process problems and find solutions. Some of their comments include:

Provided an organized process for self-evaluation, goal setting and improvement.

. . . on the whole, MEEP has provided a process from which site-based teams can operate.

It has given us a framework for school improvement and goal setting.

A systematic way to process problems.

A fourth group of respondents (16 percent) also provided a variety of comments related to positive changes in school climate and staff morale. Some of their comments include:

An improved climate for teaching and learning. An extremely positive, pro-student atmosphere.

It has made our school a more effective, pleasant place to work.

Climate has improved a lot, people are aware of each others' styles and methods.

We have a firm discipline plan, good school climate and spirit.

A small number of individuals reported that MEEP has had a divisive and/or negative impact on their school (2 percent), while others indicated that MEEP has had little or no impact on their school (11 percent). Some typical comments include:

Staff, after being burned twice, have no trust level.

Divided to greater extent the willing and unwilling staff. Some people feel "put upon."

Somewhat negative. Some tend to think MEEP makes the decisions.

Impact of MEEP on Students

A third question within this section asked school personnel to discuss the impact that MEEP has had on students. A first group of respondents (34 percent) indicated that MEEP has had a positive impact on student self-esteem, gotten them more involved with their own learning experiences, and promoted a greater sense of ownership. Some of their comments include:

Happier, more challenged, starting to become more accountable for their actions.

They have been the biggest success story because of our ability to work together for their benefit more effectively.

Improved self-discipline

They are beginning to believe that teachers really do care.

Has led to greater student involvement in school decisions, e.g., student on school board, student council setting important yearly goals.

A second group of respondents (32 percent) reported that students have benefitted from better instruction as a result of MEEP. While a number of respondents indicated that students have received better, more varied educational experiences as a result of MEEP, they also reported that students have indirectly benefitted from teachers feeling better about their jobs. Some typical comments include:

They get the benefits from what teachers gain in learning different teaching styles.

Students profit due to changes based on research such as flexible groups, cooperative learning.

Direct result in enhanced, improved instruction.

Teachers try new ideas.

Students show greater achievement as a result of MEEP activities such as staff development and in-service activities (cooperative learning, OBE).

A third group of respondents (20 percent) indicated that students have benefitted from the positive climate that MEEP has cultivated within schools. In general, they provided comments related to renewed staff commitment, positive educational change, and schools working together in a more positive way. Some of their comments include:

Anytime everybody is working together to achieve cooperative goals – the students' educational program benefits.

52

Happy staff, happy students.

Teachers tend to be more objective and enthusiastic about the future.

Hopefully better staff relationships and improved climate are affecting the kinds.

Climate change, renewed staff commitment to positive educational change for children.

A positive learning environment.

As we grow and learn to work together in a more positive way, students seem also to become more positive.

While a number of respondents (18 percent) indicated that MEEP has had little or no impact on students, others were unsure as to MEEP's impact on students (14 percent). A small number of respondents (4 percent) reported that MEEP has helped to reduce the number of behavior/discipline problems in schools. Some comments include:

Better discipline plan. A coordinated set of rules and expectations.

Behavioral rewards. Less discipline problems.

Knowledge of rules and that all adults in school enforce the rules. Better communication of discipline.

As the school and staff continue to be affected by the MEEP program, the students will be impacted more and more.

I really don't think they realize what MEEP is. Everything should benefit kids, or why do it?

Impact of MEEP Towards Long-Term Change in Schools

A fourth question within this section of the evaluation asked school personnel to discuss the impact that MEEP has had towards stimulating long-term change in their school. A first group of respondents (34 percent) indicated that MEEP has provided schools and school personnel with a process and vehicle for change, i.e., provided them with a foundation for long-range planning. Some typical comments include:

MEEP is the reason for the positive changes. We have a long-range strategic plan (5 year) and we live and die by it.

We are thinking "long-term" instead of "quick fix." We are thinking process rather than product.

MEEP has given us a process to continually assess our values and practice and focus on areas of need improvement.

MEEP has given us the road map and also the vehicles for reaching destined changes.

MEEP woke us up.

A second group of respondents (24 percent) reported that MEEP has improved morale and improved the quality of work being done within schools. More specifically, they provided comments related to enhanced teamwork among colleagues, increased involvement and participation, improved decision-making, and a greater sense of ownership. Some of their comments include:

We have created an atmosphere that change is desirable and manageable.

Has allowed staff an opportunity to grow professionally, to take risks, to move toward change in a systematic way.

It has contributed toward a school climate that is more receptive to examining research and the need to change.

It has allowed teachers to have a better feeling about their stature in the whole scheme of things.

Has made people who are often very resistant to "new" things aware of the need for change and the opportunity to guide and control it.

Respondents also provided comments related to new levels of information and awareness, student achievement, instructional changes, and professionalism (23 percent). Some typical comments include:

If change is going to happen, everyone deserves to have the same information base.

It's forced us to do special up-grading in many curriculum areas.

I think we needed a boost in teaching strategies.

Some respondents (12 percent) reported that it's too early to gauge the impact of MEEP on schools, while others expressed that MEEP has had little or no effect at all on schools (12 percent). Some of their comments include:

Not been implemented long enough. We're just beginning.

Since we're so new, it's too early to tell.

I think we are still in the process of affecting change. I see no long-term changes yet.

Need more time to determine this item with staff.

Very little, it really isn't given a lot of chance in many cases, and really isn't "in place" for us.

Absolutely NONE.

Most of our staff isn't "tuned in" to change yet.

We're still taking 1 year at a time, nothing long-term.

I have been here two years and haven't seen any long-term change.

Discussion only secondary to staff cuts.

Impact of MEEP Towards Long-Term Change in the State

A final question within this section of the evaluation asked school personnel to discuss the impact that MEEP has had towards stimulating long-term change in the state. A first group of respondents (34 percent), approximately one-third of those who completed the question, indicated that MEEP has improved morale within schools across the state and improved the quality of work across Minnesota schools. In general, they also provided comments related to enhanced teamwork among school personnel, increased involvement and participation of school personnel and parents, improved decision-making skills, and greater ownership of student achievement. Some of their comments include:

I've never met a "loser" or whiner at MEEP.

It's so good to be able to find other schools who have been in our shoes to learn from.

Many educators are committed to MEEP. Their enthusiasm is contagious.

It provided a shot in the arm for many administrators and staffs who were dying educationally and encouraged us to look at change.

A second group of respondents (26 percent) provided comments related to new levels of information and awareness across schools, improved student achievement, positive instructional changes, and increased professionalism. Some typical comments include:

It's given the teachers of our state the opportunity to speak the same language.

It trains people and gives each district valuable training and research based advice on change.

Finally the focus is on research, not just what we think might work.

An additional group of respondents (22 percent) provided a variety of nonspecific positive comments related to MEEP. Some praised MEEP as the most positive educational change effort undertaken thus far in the state to improve the quality of education. Some typical comments include:

With the number of schools that have participated, it cannot but help improve education.

Tremendous. The number of schools that continually "buy into" the program continues to grow.

The excitement and enthusiasm towards change is MEEP all the way!

It has made a significant change!! It has to keep going.

An additional group of respondents (21 percent) reported, once again, that MEEP has provided schools and school personnel with a process and vehicle for change, i.e., provided them with a foundation for long-range planning. Some typical comments include:

Provides a network for schools throughout the state to share joys and concerns – to utilize our extensive resources to their fullest.

MEEP has opened doors to research, implications and leadership that never would have occurred without this vehicle.

Bringing the state's teachers together at MEEP conferences has created a networking opportunity like no other.

Educational change can be stimulated more quickly if schools have been a part of the MEEP process.

A small number of respondents (3 percent) reported that it's too early to estimate the impact of MEEP on schools across the state, while others expressed that MEEP has had little or no effect at all on school change (6 percent). Some of their comments include:

Too early.

I don't know, too soon to tell.

Not yet. New acronym – sounds like some sites are not effective.

Hard to judge. Changes related to MEEP, even long-term efforts just underway, don't seem significant.

Not sure, don't see that many changes in neighboring schools.

None.

It is viewed suspiciously and as an under-funded burden by a lot of staff. Too many games played at the legislature with funding for this and other initiatives.

Developing an Information-Tracking System

A final purpose of the evaluation focused on identifying specific types of student achievement outcomes to be included in an ongoing formative MEEP evaluation process. This information, in turn, will be used to develop an ongoing information-tracking system best suited for tracking information related to MEEP's impact on student learning in Phase II of the evaluation. The information obtained in this section of the evaluation was obtained from the results of the survey and one-on-one interviews with school personnel at MEEP schools and

from several group discussions conducted with educators at the December, 1991 MEEP Winter Conference.

In this section of the evaluation, school personnel were asked to specify types of student achievement outcomes to be included in an ongoing information-tracking system best suited for tracking information related to MEEP's impact on student learning. Somewhat surprising, one out of five respondents indicated that they did not know what types of information should be tracked.

The largest group of respondents (30 percent) indicated that a variety of standardized tests should be used to track student achievement. Some of their comments include:

Changes in scores on standardized testings.

Types of testing used throughout the state.

Students' abilities to solve problems and efficiently and effectively make decisions.

Another group of respondents (27 percent) recommended a variety of attitude and climate surveys. A number of respondents provided comments related to morale, community, parent, and affective instruments. Some of their comments include:

Some things you can't measure through achievement data. For example, more parent input, open house for the first time, comfort of staff.

I would like to see more opinion polls of what students think and feel.

Any data that would create excitement for learning or that would identify benefits to positive, logical student achievement.

Let's start looking at self-esteem, school morale, interpersonal data. It's much more valuable.

An additional group of respondents (15 percent) suggested tracking outcomes related to outcome-based education (OBE) and the state's new graduation requirements. One person commented:

Something to show their ability to use their knowledge outside of the classroom.

Another group of respondents (14 percent) warned against relying solely on traditional forms of standardized testing and indicated that MEEP should use a wide variety of measures and even develop new forms of assessment. Some of their comments include:

Please don't continue to rely on academic achievement data – it's worthless!

We have more student achievement (testing) than we need. We should use other measures such as looking at changes in how we teach.

I'm not sure, but I do believe that basic skills in reading, mathematics, science, social studies, etc., as measured by standardized achievement tests portray only a small portion of what has been accomplished.

This is a tough area. I would not like to see standardized tests used, and I'm not sure what forms of other tests would work. I also think we can't expect sudden or drastic changes in a short time.

Ten percent of respondents indicated that it would be difficult to track any connection between MEEP and students. Others suggested attendance, dropout, and graduation rates (8 percent), portfolios and authentic assessment (6 percent), or a longitudinal study with a control group (3 percent). Some of their comments include:

Much of what we do in MEEP cannot be measured by test scores.

I don't think you will be able to find information which will indicate MEEP's impact on student learning since there are so many changes occurring in Minnesota education simultaneously that achievement data cannot be clearly attributed to any one change.

I think it is difficult to directly tie achievement data to any one cause. And, I believe, a mistake to do so.

I should think it difficult to isolate MEEP practices as a variable with direct influence on student achievement. This might be best forgotten.

We have tried to make the MEEP label invisible in school improvement, so giving credit to MEEP for improved student learning doesn't occur.

I would look for decreased drop out rate, lower teenage pregnancy, etc.

Data on graduation rates.

If it is local, we need to do portfolios, projects, tests, etc. more so than one shot normative test scores.

It gets real frustrating trying to find ways to always attach something or anything to student achievement. Overall, MEEP has created a better environment in schools.

Please don't start something new.

Additional Information MEEP Should Know

A final question in the survey inventory asked respondents to elaborate on any other information that MEEP should be aware of. Overall, 305 individuals (31 percent) provided a response to this question. Of those responding to the question, the largest group of respondents (49 percent) provided a variety of comments elaborating on specific programs and/or policies limiting MEEP's effectiveness. Within this group, 22 percent of respondents provided comments suggesting how MEEP or specific policies might be improved. Some of their comments include:

As MEEP leadership teams change, it's important that new members receive the same training as the original ones. This will keep the program vibrant. Otherwise the new members flounder, lack expertise, and are unable to be effective.

MEEP staff should be provided with more information about funding for implementing educational improvements and consistent updates on new trends in education.

We need more workshops within the school as we did when we started. Now we see or hear very little about MEEP. Present members haven't had the training the first group of teachers had.

There needs to be a way to check up to see whether a school board/administration is encouraging MEEP to work rather than just sending the people (team) and not giving much other support/time.

Stay in a facilitative and supportive role – mandates or greater accountability will hurt the motivation of principals and teachers. And the key to the success of MEEP is the leadership of the principals.

Maybe it should be required by the state that all administrators have MEEP training so if they move to a new school, that school doesn't have to take 2 steps back or tread water until he catches up.

Others within this first group provided positive reactions to specific MEEP policies or procedures (7 percent), comments regarding regional issues and/or their regional facilitator (9 percent), and references as to how MEEP interacts with other state agencies (11 percent). Some of their comments include:

Our school system has several leadership teams. Their efforts have been clearly defined and coordinated to make maximum use of time, talents, and money towards making our school the best. MEEP has been a very active part of this process.

The most valuable aspect in our school is that MEEP gave people a mandate to implement some things. Being on a MEEP team gives a person a freedom and desire to suggest things. Other staff members are more willing to give these suggestions a chance if they feel it is an open process?

Would be nice to see what other schools are doing. How about some type of newsletter?

MEEP works effectively in our school because it made us focus on a positive educational process. Much of this we were doing, but not as structured or consistent as we do now.

It seems to me that with the overload on the regional facilitators, MEEP at the state level needs to make the local coordinators option more viable by better education administrative personnel, including school boards on the needs and possible benefits of it.

MEEP activities tend to remove the teacher from their classroom instruction, duties, and roles. Could the training and workshops be held in the summer months so as not to disrupt the teacher/learning process.

MEEP facilitators are spread very thin. They are each responsible for many schools in addition to the numerous meetings and sessions they run. They are not able to be very visible in the school site.

MEEP's effectiveness at K-6 is very successful. There is less success at secondary schools. This needs to be studied to improve effectiveness of MEEP of 7-12 schools.

MEEP teams and schools need constant reinforcement and feedback to know if they are doing things right. It might help avoid the bottoming out syndrome.

When MEEP teams bog down, they need more help than ever to get back up. Maybe the regional facilitator should check in with teams to see how they're doing or if they need some guidance.

The support from the regional facilitator has been excellent.

We need more guidance by our regional facilitator and administrator for MEEP to work.

We are entering a new era of change. OBE, if fully implemented, will require a change in philosophy for many teachers – what part can MEEP play in that area?

I am terribly concerned that MEEP is being lost in the OBE innovation. Years of training, money, and staff time are being forgotten.

The second largest group of respondents (17 percent) pointed out that there are many demands/needs on school personnel and districts that have kept MEEP from being implemented and/or utilized to its full potential. In general, their comments were related to lack of funding within individual school districts, the unwillingness of some teachers to devote time, and the lack of time for other teachers. Some of their comments include:

Unless districts can provide time which doesn't take teachers away from the classroom, MEEP will be in question – time must be found to provide quality planning.

I don't have time to do my own job well because of budget cuts and staff cuts and increased paperwork demands. I am committed to site-based management and think MEEP is a major support, but I wonder how to add this full-time job to the full-time job I already have.

Much time and energy is involved and most of it is personal time not compensated for.

I don't feel that our district is committed to making MEEP an integral part of change – not willing to spend money.

Categorical funds for school improvement are being drained from many directions.

Small schools have few teachers. Won't be able to have many groups for different group objectives.

A third group of respondents (16 percent) provided a series of general positive statements about MEEP. In particular, their comments related to the extent to which MEEP has had a positive effect on the quality of Minnesota education. Some typical comments include:

Keep up the good work. MEEP does have a positive effect on staff, students, and the entire school system.

I think MEEP is the best process I have come across for school change. Super plan. Super effort.

I am very glad we were a part of the training. It gave us a good foundation and the skills to build on, along with continued support. There is no way we could be this far along with out MEEP.

MEEP, for our money, is the best most complete program for school change that we have experienced.

This is the best thing our school's restructuring team could have come across – thank you.

MEEP is the best thing that ever happened for the students of Minnesota. Please continue to support our efforts. We need a strong state/regional/local support system. MEEP is the model for school improvement.

Keep up the good work. Even though results are difficult to quantify and measure, I can tell it is having a positive impact.

I have been in Minnesota public education for 40 years. MEEP is the most significant change agent during those 4 decades. The change will last because it is being led and pushed by teachers. We can really get things done now, staff is involved and they influence other staff to move ahead. MEEP has made my later years as principal productive and satisfying.

I have been amazed again and again at the empowering and energizing qualities MEEP has had in schools – with parents – at workshops and between facilitators. It is important that MEEP staff members know and recognize the qualitative changes along with the quantitative ones.

A fourth group of respondents (13 percent) provided comments regarding internal school issues. In general, they provided comments related to internal conflict among superintendents, principals, and school boards. Some of their comments include:

In order for MEEP leadership teams to be the most effective, some power in decision-making is necessary. We don't have it now.

We run into a snag each negotiating year. Staff members feel that local school boards do not negotiate fairly and this impairs the MEEP process.

I feel MEEP teams in individual schools function very well as agents for change. Their impact is often negated by actions of superintendents, school boards, and the state legislature who make arbitrary decisions about what is good for education. It can be frustrating to make a school-wide decision and then find out it can't be implemented because someone else decided funds were needed elsewhere.

Our school has a few negative staff members who have made it very difficult for MEEP leaders. As a result, I have felt negative about my experiences with some staff. However I feel it is a very worthwhile program and overall it has improved our staff and schools. It's just hard to escape some feelings from negative staff who are leaders (not MEEP).

Recommendations

Given the findings of the evaluation, the following recommendations are offered:

- **Continue to fund/increase the legislative funding for MEEP.** All evidence from the evaluation suggests that MEEP has had a substantial impact on influencing long-term change within schools throughout Minnesota. More specifically, MEEP is being integrated into the long-term planning efforts of schools, its mission and role are clearly understood by schools, its procedures and products are easily incorporated, and schools that "stay the course" do achieve change.

- **Consider applying for validation through the National Diffusion Network (NDN).** Given its proven record, MEEP may want to consider applying to become a validated program of the NDN so that districts around the country could benefit from its record of success. The NDN's yearly program catalog, *Educational Programs That Work*, would provide a natural vehicle for dissemination of the MEEP process.

- **Conduct formative evaluation of MEEP's ongoing support systems.** Evidence collected during the evaluation suggests some implementation problems and lack of sufficient support for schools. Formative evaluation should be used to examine whether the level of ongoing support provided through MEEP's current structure/system is adequate, assess whether the current number and role of regional facilitators is sufficient for the number of schools now in MEEP, determine whether school teams trained at the seminars are adequately prepared to implement the MEEP process within their schools, and design a mechanism for ensuring MEEP's continuation in a school when team members change.

- **Develop an comprehensive ongoing evaluation process for tracking impact carefully.** The results of the evaluation make clear the relation of MEEP to long-term educational change in Minnesota. While it is both appropriate and important for MEEP to begin tracking student achievement, it is equally important to recognize that as a long-term educational process, it is unrealistic to expect sudden or drastic change in student achievement in a short time as schools enter the MEEP process. Consequently, such an ongoing information-tracking system best suited for evaluating

MEEP's impact on student learning must not rely solely on traditional forms of standardized testing, but should couple a variety of existing measures with new forms of assessment as well.

Appendix A: MEEP Survey Inventory

MEEP
Feedback Inventory

1. Please indicate your **current position**: (Check one)

   ☐ Teacher, Elementary ☐ Superintendent ☐ Non-Certified Staff
   ☐ Teacher, Junior/Middle High ☐ Other Central Office ☐ Parent
   ☐ Teacher, High School ☐ Principal/Ass't Principal ☐ Other _____

2. Please indicate the **total number of years that you have been employed in K-12 education**: (Check one)

   ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 3 to 5 years ☐ 11 to 15 years
   ☐ 1 to 2 years ☐ 6 to 10 years ☐ 16 years or more

3. How many years have you been in your **current position**? (Check one)

   ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 3 to 5 years ☐ 11 to 15 years
   ☐ 1 to 2 years ☐ 6 to 10 years ☐ 16 years or more

4. Please indicate the **location of your school**: (Check one)

   ☐ Greater Minnesota ☐ Surburban ☐ Urban

5. Please indicate your **gender**: ☐ Female ☐ Male

6. Please indicate **how many separate professional growth activities (e.g., classes, workshops, seminars) you typically attend** each year: (Check one)

   ☐ None ☐ 3 to 5 Activities ☐ More than 10 Activities
   ☐ 1 to 2 Activities ☐ 6 to 10 Activities

7. Please indicate the **year** your school joined MEEP: (Check one)

   ☐ A 1984 Pilot Site ☐ 1985 ☐ 1986 ☐ 1987 ☐ 1988 ☐ 1989 ☐ 1990 ☐ 1991 ☐ Don't Know

8. Please indicate your **current role within MEEP**: (Check all that apply)

   ☐ MEEP leadership team member ☐ Principal
   ☐ Non-MEEP teacher ☐ Superintendent
   ☐ Regional Facilitator ☐ Other Central Office
   ☐ Local Coordinator ☐ Other _____
   ☐ MATP/CoLeaP Participant

9. In addition to MEEP, which of the following programs is **your school currently involved with?** (Check all that apply)

   ☐ Planning, Evaluation, Reporting (PER) ☐ High Success Consortium activities
   ☐ Assurance of Mastery (AoM) ☐ Site-based Decision-Making/Management
   ☐ Chapter I ☐ Differentiated Staffing
   ☐ North Central Accreditation ☐ District-initiated change efforts _____
   ☐ OBE-grant from Minnesota SDE ☐ Other _____
   ☐ Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model (ODDM)

10. In your opinion, **what exactly is MEEP**, i.e., what do you perceive its mission and role to be?

11. How is MEEP **being implemented** at your school?

12. What activities at your school **distinguish MEEP from other change/improvement** activities?

13. MEEP training relies extensively on a research base. To what extent is that **research base used** at your school? Please explain.

14. What aspects of MEEP have been the **most valuable** to you and your school? Please explain.

15. What aspects of MEEP have been the **least valuable** to you and your school? Please explain.

16. How do you know if **the MEEP process has been working** at your school?

17. Some schools have reported a time moving forward when they "hit bottom." Has this happened at your school? If yes, please explain.

_____

_____

18. In your opinion, **what impact has MEEP had on**:

your school? _____

_____

your school's staff? _____

_____

students at your school? _____

_____

19. What specific change-related outcomes (if any) would you attribute **solely to MEEP?**

_____

_____

_____

20. In your opinion, what **impact has MEEP had towards stimulating long-term educational change**:

at your school? _____

_____

_____

throughout the state? _____

_____

_____

21. A central purpose of this project is to develop an ongoing information-tracking system for gathering, processing, and monitoring site information related to MEEP's impact on student learning. In your opinion, what **specific types of student achievement data** should be included in such a system?

_____

_____

_____

_____

22. In this section of the survey, we'd like to determine the extent to which different aspects of change are occurring at schools as well as the role MEEP has played in facilitating change. *First*, using the seven-point **Extent of Change** scale below, please indicate the degree to which this aspect of change is occurring at your school. *Second*, using the seven-point **Influence of MEEP** scale, please indicate the extent to which MEEP has influenced the change process for each aspect of change.

Aspect of Change	Extent of Change 1 = Not Occurring 7 = Consistently Occurring	Influence of MEEP 1 = Little/No Measurable Influence 7 = Significant Influence
A known, shared plan for school improvement which is supported by the leadership team, building staff, district administration, and the school board.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know
Support of the building staff for school improvement efforts.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know
Allocation of resources (time and money) by district administration and the school board to support school improvement efforts beyond the school's first year of involvement.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know
In-school time allocated for leadership team planning and staff planning to work on school improvement activities.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know
Leadership teams have access to and the support of designated support systems, in particular support from the regional facilitator.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know
Involvement of the principal in implementing school improvement activities.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know
Positive experiences as a member of the MEEP leadership team.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know
Leadership team members have the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and implement a school improvement program.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☐ Don't Know

23. What other information should MEEP staff be aware of?

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Thank You for Your Time and Cooperation in Completing This Inventory!

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Appendix B: Interview Format

Interview Questions and Format

Questions Related to the Effectiveness of MEEP

1. What do you perceive MEEP to be?
2. How has/is MEEP being implemented at your school?
3. In addition to MEEP, what other change programs and/or projects is your school currently involved with?
4. What activities at your school distinguish MEEP from other change/improvement activities?
5. What aspects of MEEP have/are going well at your school?
6. What aspects of MEEP have not been going well at your school?
7. What aspects of MEEP have been the most valuable to you and your school?
8. What aspects of MEEP have been the least valuable to you and your school?
9. What specific change-related outcomes would you attribute solely to MEEP?
10. From your perspective, how effective is MEEP's current organizational structure?
11. From your perspective, how effective is MEEP's current administration?

Questions Related to Evaluating the Impact of MEEP

12. In your opinion, what impact has MEEP had on schools?
13. In your opinion, what impact has MEEP had on school personnel?
14. In your opinion, what impact has MEEP had on students?
15. In your opinion, what impact has MEEP had towards stimulating long-term educational change at your school?
16. In your opinion, what impact has MEEP had towards stimulating long-term educational change throughout the state?

Questions Related to Developing an Information-Tracking System

17. A central purpose of this project is to develop an ongoing information-tracking system for gathering, processing, and monitoring site information related to MEEP's impact on student learning. In your opinion, what specific types of student achievement data should be included in such a system?
18. What type of system would be best suited for tracking this information?
19. How would this information be of use to MEEP schools?